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MAN OVERBOARD!

A Naughty Novel

by

Hervey White

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CHAPTER I

The Ship

- I am so glad we decided against the men!... And Marion Cody settled luxuriously among the cushions.

- I thought it was the men who decided against us. Sylvia Howard's lips were drawn in the faintest smile.

- Now, Sylvia, don't carp. Miss Cody patted her friend's hand with generous authority. You know I am jealous of the men's falling in love with you, my dear. You know I want you all for myself.

- But you love to sparkle, Cody, and you can't all the time with just me.

- Don't I sparkle for you, dear?

- Beautifully! But a diamond needs many candles.

- Now, Sylvia, I don't want to be a diamond. I want to be a damned electric light.

- An arc light! You are! murmured Sylvia.

- Not enough either! I want to be a power-house.

- You run me, dear.

- It requires a complete electric system to do that. Look at that landscape. Have I not chosen well?

Their car was sweeping around a patterned valley that spread like a Persian rug before the mountain... Meadows, tilled fields, and villas, swung like tapestry, and curving drive-ways gave perspective to the design. Soon the driver turned into a private gate, standing open, and began to climb the leisurely ascent. First, they penetrated a young grove of eucalyptus, then crossed an extended flat of fresh-sprung barley. A thin hedge of pink geraniums screened the sea view, the top-most blossoms full eight feet above the ground.

- A man for pink! laughed Miss Cody sententiously. Don't tell me the men aren't sentimental. They wallow in sentiment. Pink! That's for love. And pink roses on the terraces!... I told you.

- Mr. Morgan was thinking of a contrast to the sea. He explained it to me on the train that pink gives more depth to the turquoise.

- Love, my dear, love was what he was thinking of. Even I am falling into Swinburnian rhymes. Love and of... O, fiddle! I suppose all the men pronounce it *uv*.

- There's the house behind the pepper trees. Isn't it stunning! It heaves against the sky like a great white ship.

- Sylvia, you are the poet. To hell with Swinburne! Ship ahoy!... An idea... We'll call it The Morganatic! How's that for a pun? You are a genius.

- If it is a ship, Cody, you are the captain. There's

none that can stand up against you.

- Then you shall be the mate. And this car shall be the pinnace... Bo'sn, lay hard off the larboard bow. I say, Carlos, have you ever sailed a boat?

- Ma'am? questioned the driver deferentially... No, ma'am, I've always kept to the land.

- No more have I. But we shall call you Bo'sn. That's sea-dog for boatswain. Now, remember.

- Yes, ma'am.

- No: you must say Ay, ay, Sir!

- Ay, ay, sir.

- It sounds like a boys' club in a social settlement when the director asks for volunteers to pass programs. And, Cody...

- Captain, sir, corrected that lady authoritatively. When you speak of me, you may call me the skipper...

- I think, Captain Cody, went on Miss Howard in mock seriousness, I think the man who runs the pinnace is the cockswain.

- If you are going to quibble, matey, I think sailors do not speak of running a boat. But I sail above all such trivialities. I mean to go in for general effect only. Genre stuff, as our friends, the artists, put it.

At this moment the car drew up at a Gothic door set under a white stucco porch of Spanish architecture. Marigolds crowded thick about.

- It feels like a church rather than a ship, laughed Sylvia as she stepped inside the door-way.

- The cathedral builders had the same feeling when they called their main edifice the nave.

Mrs. Stowe was helping with the luggage.

- All right, Carlos, she was saying.

- Don't forget, Bos'n, admonished the Captain.

- Ay, ay, Sir, Ma'am! Carlos bowed politely.

- It's a ship, Mrs. Stowe, explained Miss Cody grandly. I am the Captain, and this is Miss Howard, the Mate. I will show her the cabin; you needn't bother.

- Your state-rooms are all ready, Captain Cody.

- Ay, ay, Sir! replied the Captain still more grandly.

- Hall, English. I like the stairway; said Sylvia, admiring, and giving the Captain's hand a delighted squeeze.

- Here is the dining-room: more on the Spanish order again; but dining-rooms the world over I fancy suggest mortuary rites rather than festivity.

- Oh, but the long windows give out to the sea! and Sylvia pushed through on to an open gallery, that extended the full length of the house.

This gallery had groined vaulting, like a cloister, supported on the outside by a row of stuccoed pillars, between which ran a bench-like balustrade. Around these the vivid red poinsettias trailed their flower-foliage against the whiteness of the plaster, forming most dramatic frames for the panels of the sea as the gazer paced down the sheltered corridor... turquoise, lapis-lazuli, malachite, jade, chrysophrase, amethyst and garnet... pigment colors could not name them, they were luminous, made of sunlight transmuted through water... far from sight lay the delectable islands, but

their presence was suggested by the floating continent of sea-kelp that mingled its Tyrian purples in the tides.

Sylvia walked down the full length of the open gallery, marvelling at each landscape vision as she passed it. The foreground was their lawn of native grasses, unmown and sprinkled in with flowers introduced with such modest art of the gardener as to yield the effect of natural bloom-strown meadow. Great boulders heaved their smooth backs here and there, while the receding slope of their hill-top gave so unobtrusively into the wide terraces of the garden that the result was one of centuries of old-world horticulture, but stimulated by the southern enthusiasm of California. The terraces were chiefly given over to olive orchard and vineyard, the spacious flats doubly planted with vegetable beds, where sometimes homelike flowers were interblended. A palm tree rose stately and lone at the abrupt ledge terminus of the second terrace, giving perspective to the sea view on the left, while on the right, where the terraces disappeared around the hill, the sea view rose beyond an orchard of tangerines and grapefruit, shimmering away into the tints of lost horizons.

Sylvia stood for some moments at the north end of the gallery where the stuccoed arch gave view up a glowing valley and thence away o'er the rounded backs of red-gold hills. Their own thorny rugged mountain lay to the left or westward, and could only be glimpsed around the pepper trees. The eucalyptus grove of the drive-way lay below, while to the right of it extended the barley fields and meadows, plumed frequently with

green live-oaks like aged apple trees, and sloping down distantly to the sea in a peninsula with a blue mountain at its point.

Sylvia turned to her companion enthusiastically, grasping her two hands and holding them, a sunshine of gratitude in her moist eyes like reflections in a brown meadow brook.

- Cody, let's live here always, will you?... away from the world of strife, and men.

Marion Cody's laugh was always a little hard, but now it mellowed with victorious content.

- It takes strife to acquire all this, matey. The men, I grant you, we could do very well without. But take a look at the music room before we go out to our hut.

They stepped through another of the full-length, open windows, and were in a hall more than ever like a church. Indeed, it resembled the interior of a Roman basilica, and held much of that same sense of sheltering space. The timbered and coffered ceiling was lofty, there was a gallery with alcoved stairway across one end; at the opposite end, a triple-arch window of soft translucent glass; on the veil wall side, a great chimney piece built in, like a chapel; withal an atmosphere for incense and rest-worship. There was no organ in the gallery as one would expect. Instead, the space was fitted with a library, lighted by low, balcony-giving windows. On a platform, just in front, was a grand piano standing open, drawn forward from beneath the gallery sufficiently so that its low architrave would not

interfere with the sound.

Sylvia threw off her hat and gloves and running to it with laughing seriousness struck the first bars of the Pilgrims' Chorus. The accoustics proved good, the melody rolled, and both women gave up to its enjoyment. Then, as if well arranged by a stage manager, a door opened softly beneath the gallery, and in pranced the athletic figure of a dancer, a buxom young woman of five and twenty, clad in the scantiest costume of trunks and tunic, bare arms, bare legs, her round head wreathed with lilies, taking rhythmically, in accordance with the music, the attitudes expressive of the theme.

Behind her, in the doorway, stood another young woman, but conventionally dressed, this one like a saucy bunch of sunshine in gay laughter, her white ruffled frock set off with clusters of nasturtiums arranged audaciously at her throat and at her belt. Still back of her appeared two other women, arm-linked, one a mannish little figure in gray walking costume, with thin hair and sallow face and bead-bright eyes, her companion, more youthful and of a melancholy richness, slender, passionate, dark, and with a sensitive petulance in her smiling that gave warning of anger to be aroused. These were respectively dancer, pianist, poet, painter, already established members of the household, and they were coming into the studio for their regular afternoon session of work, each one equipped with the paraphenalia of her profession, and all, except the dancer, somewhat dismayed at the intrusion

and familiar occupancy of the new arrivals, whom they supposed had gone directly to their rooms.

Each one had met the surprise in characteristic manner: the dancer... her name was Cecily Blount... had accepted music and an audience as her natural element, and like a gold-fish that has found a new retreat in its aquarium, had begun to swim in it on a tour of exploration; the ingenuous pianist, also familiar with audiences of strangers, had only to be gay and look pretty; the poetess, who took all thrills very seriously, felt bound to be quite shivery with this one; the painter, who had lived much alone and was more suspicious, wondered why the new guests had not announced themselves in more formal manner... their taking thus possession seemed somewhat forward.

But Miss Cody was a woman of the world, and passing the dancer with gay mimicry of mock obeisance, she advanced cordially to the hesitating artist, and addressing her as Miss Gaylord, the hostess, made apology and explanation for their presence, calling Sylvia for formal introduction.

- She has just escaped from a religious aunt in Los Angeles, she said laughing, and too much liberty has affected her brain.

With such chatter a pleasant basis was established and everything settled down into its natural sequence, the pianist, Miss Knox, began arranging her music for the dancer, Miss Gaylord brought forth her easel and scrutinized the canvas critically, the poetess, who had been introduced as Mrs. Letitia Swan, took out her tab-

let and awaited inspiration, while the new arrivals went off to their rooms, which were in a rustic hut on a lower terrace of the garden, on a rounded point with the citrus grove beneath it, and looking across to an added expanse of sea.

- How did the poetess ever get among them? queried Sylvia while preparing for the bath. But I suppose there must always be a discord to accent the harmony of the composition.

- How clever you are, matey, to grasp a situation! Now when I was here last week, I thought the poetess the most interesting of the bunch. But today, her voice did grate on my nerves. The greatest gift a woman can have is not beauty, or sympathy, it seems, but rather, a mellow, vibrant voice.

- It is the sympathy, behind, that gives real mellowness, said Sylvia from the bath-room, in the midst of splashing.

Miss Cody was taking down her hair before the panel-glass, and its glossy blackness always had the effect to make her silent.

- Her voice is raspy like her manner, went on Sylvia. Is Swan her maiden name, or the name of her divorced husband?

- Husband's name, I fancy. I'm not sure. I should like to get a glimpse of the man who would marry her.

- If 'twas long ago, no doubt she was prettier.

- Sylvia, do you think I have a mannish voice?

- Strong and rich, but not mannish, assured Sylvia promptly. At least not masculine. You sometimes af-

fect the mannish.

- A protest against my timidity, asserted Marion.

- The pianist is the nicest, resumed Sylvia musing, But Beatrice Knox is not a suitable name for her.

- Bee, or Trixie, would not go so badly.

- But Knox! It sounds like the prize ring, or the War Department Building.

-She ought to be Cecily instead of that Amazonian dancer. Why will women with fat legs persist in showing them?

- Or skinny legs either, for that matter, urged Sylvia, I hate nudity in women. It's repulsive.

- In women! It's more repulsive in men.

- They are not given to showing themselves... the manly ones.

- And what is your impression of Miss Gaylord? Charlotte now becomes her very well.

- Jealous, restless, morbid, extremely sensitive... deliberated Sylvia, I think we shall like her the best of the lot. I suppose such combinations as this are always bizarre.

- They fit in with each other better than we do with them. But I mean to cultivate every one just the same. I shall put them all into my next novel.

- I suppose it was Mr. Morgan who rounded them up.

- My dear, we are not cattle nor he a ranche-man. Turn on the water for me when you have finished. How fresh you look in that pink robe! Yes, lovely! You really ought to have an evening gown of pink.

- I am partial to pale green; pink is infantile.

- You have the complexion of an infant. Now, don't pout. Your high forehead suggests Minerva.

- Minerva with a Roman nose! O, Cody!

- A Roman nose is better than a dished one, and my face is spotted like a strawberry bed. Yes, Sylvia, you are the beauty of our corporation. You may as well be resigned to play the part.

- I don't have any more style than a mouse, and you walk like a grenadier in full uniform.

- Darling, don't the grenadiers ride?

- Not in the illustrated papers... I wish my name were Letitia.

- It would suit your prim little mouth better than it does that steel trap it belongs to.

- I didn't notice Mrs. Swan's mouth was like a steel trap. Her eyes were pleasant... Let's loll until it's time to dress for dinner.

- You moon about the view while I am in the bath. It is glorious. Even my prosaic self am disposed to eulogize.

Sylvia was half reclining in the window-seat, looking out over the opaque sheen of the Pacific. A palm tree stood close by to aid perspective and a thin hedge of pink roses laced the foreground which was a tilled terrace planted with olive trees and kitchen vegetables. An acequia flowed over gray boulders close by the hut, tempering the heat with a constant coolness of tinkling water. Even colors were made to contribute to the effect of freshness, for the kitchen garden contained

nothing of the hot greens of potatoes or carrots, but the blues of cauliflowers leeks and cabbage blended in with the gray leafage of the olives, while against the wall vined the acanthus-like tendrils of the artichoke in harmonious softness of cool tones. Below the three broad terraces were grass-clipped pastures, plumed with live-oak trees suggesting ancient orchards, their shade sparsely dotted with resting sheep.

- It is Arcady, save Pan and his shepherds! sighed Sylvia. It the Isles of Greece...

- The Isles of Greece, where burning Sappho loved and sung... spouted Marion. Don't ask me for more, though it was in my 'Favorite Selections'.

- Do you know, I have half a hankering for Byron.

- Sylvia Howard, will you leave such degeneracies with the Hoosier dialect? Can I not rouse you with mention of all the poetry journals on the continent, and the adulations paid therein to S. H., the subtlest mistress of the rhythms and imagery of vers libre? If California is going to sentimentalize you back to Byron we'll take the first train for New York. Next thing you will be yearning for Felicia Dorothea Hemans, or Jean Ingelow. My God, Matey, what an old woman I have become! It was aeons ago I used to read the Bells of Enderby... "Play uppe, play uppe... in some way I imagined that rhymed with puppy -

- And I used to dote on The Letter L, mused Sylvia.

- "You are old, Father William..." Come, let's be seaworthy. We're aboard The Morganatic. Tomor-

row I shall get busy with the ship's log, in land-lubber terms, the eighth chapter of my novel; and you, my dear, must finish your volume of poems: the pubiishers, the critics, the public, all demand it.

They set about their dressing for dinner with all the care of ladies who are to dine formally. They recognized that women are more exacting about such niceties than when there are to be men at the table. Miss Cody was resplendent in white satin, extremely low cut and generous as to train. With bare shoulders, her imperially crowned head showed to advantage; and while her features were irregular, they were strong, and did not belie the proud dignity of her gracious carriage. Sylvia was gowned in her favorite pale green... round cut neck, and silver fillet in her hair. Sylvia was always sweet and lovely, but with a modesty that was at the same time placid and self-contained

As the two walked along the gravel path to the house, they were well worthy of the admiration they elicited from the group awaiting them on the long gallery, itself a colorful picture framed in by the poinsettia-laced pillars. Beatrice Knox was dressed in white with marigolds in her sunshiny hair and at her belt. Charlotte Gaylord was in purple silk with amber beads. Cecily Blount, in nasturtium red and yellow. Letitia Swan looked hot and sallow in gray, while another lady, cool and pallid in the same color, stood formally awaiting introduction.

- Dr. Maxwell, brusquely explained the stuffy poetess. Miss Cody and Miss Howard, she added.

It was as natural for Marion Cody to take the leadership as it was for the others to follow. None the less, it was Miss Gaylord who acted as hostess and took the place to serve at the head of the table. As Miss Cody was placed at the foot, socially speaking, the table turned a summersault in an instant; or was it that Miss Cody became the host, whereas Miss Gaylord still retained her serving office?

- This villa has many perfections, began Marion, as all seemed to be awaiting her comment, but not the least of them, I think you will agree with me, is the fact that there are not any men.

- Confusion to the men! proclaimed Mrs. Letitia Swan.

- If we wish them confusion, laughed Beatrice Knox with a flash, I think we should charge them like an army.

- Or like sunlight in a marsh, said Sylvia prettily, her glance of approval showing where the compliment was directed.

- I'm sure I don't wish the men more confusion than they are already in, corrected Charlotte Gaylord.

- My dear lady, Miss Cody took the reins, I assure you I was not defaming the noble creatures, I was selfishly thinking only of ourselves. I believe we are all here to work, and men, to say the least, are an interruption.

- They have to be amused, chimed silvery Sylvia.

- Flatter them and 'tis done, laughed Miss Knox.

- Yes, men are bowled over by flattery, echoed

the poetess.

- We must not allow them a monopoly of that weakness, urged Miss Cody; you speak now of a drink of which I am particularly fond.

- Why not a flower, Cody? asked Miss Howard.

- It is stronger than a flower: it is a liquor. Does it not intoxicate, even to folly, if not to madness?... Flatter me, friends, flatter me, and I am your slave!

The poetess was put out, and turned to the Doctor. The conversation became divided and personal, it was not until they had retired to the library for coffee that Miss Cody broached her theory of the ship.

- It is a ship, and I am the Chief Steward, announced the poetess, who had returned to spokesmanship.

- Salute the Chief Steward! said Miss Cody taking command.

- Then I ought to be the Engineer, suggested Charlotte Gaylord in the trembling hope that they would name her for Captain.

- Salute the Engineer! commanded the commanding Marion.

- I propose Miss Cody for Captain. It was the innocence of Beatrice Knox that made the rush.

- Salute Captain Cody! said Sylvia softly; and at once they all felt it had to be.

- I am going to be a Midshipman, announced the gay Beatrice. I shall carry all the intimate orders to the mate.

- But who will be the Mate? asked Cecily Blount.

I shall be Purser: he's always fat.

- There's nobody left, but Miss Howard, if Miss Maxwell reserves her prerogative as Ship's Doctor.

- Matey, you're elected! declared the Captain.

- When the question of a name for the ship was introduced, it was the Captain who proposed The Morganatic. - While genuine, it is unofficial, she put forth, and I am sure our landlord will enjoy the pun.

Mrs. Stowe, the Cabin Steward, was consulted, and she assured them Mr. Morgan would be delighted. When she had rented the villa of him for a boarding-house, they had tried to introduce the word, *pension*, to apply to it, but it didn't take... many people could not pronounce it, and the place was now inconveniently nameless.

Then the question came up of a formal christening with a bottle of champagne in nautical fashion, but always the interest of the discussion centred around men... should they invite men aboard their ship, or should they exclude them? They finally put the matter to ballot, wherein each voter was asked to give her reasons. The Purser took charge of the roster, Each speaker was allowed two minutes uninterrupted. Here is the report of the Purser, taken from the ship's log:

"Captain Marion Cody being first asked for vote with statement, deposed and pronounced as follows...

'Each one of us has come here for her winter's work... I speak only for myself: I have to finish a novel; my publishers must have the manuscript by April, and it is already the seventh of January... Now, men

guests mean entertainment, conversation. Also we must accept their invitations in return. We all know how much energy this consumes, not to speak of the time. If one has the right to invite guests, we all have, and we will soon be rivaling each other in hospitality. We make no rule about entertaining on shore. There is a club house along side at which we all have cards. Here on board, we are practically all strangers to each other, and we have ample opportunity among ourselves for companionship and entertainment. As for taking men on board the Morganatic, my vote is... No. Please so record it.

"Mate Sylvia Howard spoke as follows: 'I like men and their company, but I've come to rest; also, a little, I hope, to work. I vote... No, for reasons similar to the Captain's.

"Chief Engineer, Charlotte Gaylord, said: 'I don't wan't to ask any men, myself, but just to stand out for individual freedom, I vote... Yes. (*applause*)

"Chief Steward, Letitia Swan... 'God damn the men! I say every time. If I could, I'd vote 'em off the face of the earth. (*cheers*)

"The Purser, Cecily Blount... As I want to make my exercises practically nude, I must selfishly vote... No, to all men.

"The Midshipman, Beatrice Knox... 'Men are nice, and I like them, and I don't care; I think I'll vote... Yes: against the Captain.

"The Doctor, Priscilla Maxwell... 'The matter is one of complete indifference to me. If men are about,

I do not notice it. Neither do I notice it if they are away. I wish to work constantly at my microscope. But not to seem to oppose men, I vote... Yes.

Summary: the vote stands, four against, and three for. Decision... Men shall not be permitted on board.

CHAPTER II

The Man

A week of plain sailing passed over the Morganatic, only ruffled by the arrival of two more shipmates, a sculptress and her daughter from St. Louis, who were immediately dubbed The Passengers, First and Second Class.

Irene Duke was a woman still in the prime of her beauty at forty, and a formidable rival for younger women whenever men entered into consideration... True, she was not tall like the Captain; she had nothing of the sweet sensitiveness of the Mate. These two latter women immediately pronounced her bold, and if a Greek statue could be characterized as bold, their dictum might be justified by reasons. Familiar with nude figures from her girlhood, she had no sense of shame about exposure. She, herself, had much of the Greek in her figure, cultivated as it had been along lines of aesthetic sentiment. Her feet, limbs, and torse

had never been confined by tight clothing, her throat had never been marred by stiff collars. her arms gave naturally to free, upward movement, and her round head, strongly poised on supple neck, lent expression genuinely statuesque to her features which were regular and not unlike the Greek, while her soft skin had the placidity of pink-tinged marble. Indeed, she was in every way superior to the over-practiced figure of Cecily Blount: for whereas the dancer had studied only for display, and had taken her exercises accordingly, the sculptress had kept beauty for her ideal, and, not applying it consciously to herself, had grown into it through devotion to the universal. She was fond of making her person beautiful, it is true, and was wont to twine leaves in her smooth braids, that were always bound crown-like around her head; but she had the sculptor's faculty of seeing her beauty outside of herself, for its own sake, rather than as satisfaction to her vanity. Her eyes were gray, her brows level and cleanly penciled with ashen brown to match her hair. Her lips were pink with the health of a young girl; they knew how to take pretty curves, quite coquettishly, for notwithstanding her marble-like serenity, she was in no way a woman of stone.

Her daughter, Tessie, as is not unusual among the daughters of 'advanced women', was conventional in figure, dress, and manner. Of russet freckled complexion, brown eyes and brilliant red hair - like sunlit copper - she cultivated high-heeled shoes and tight-laced clothing, stiff collars, long sleeves, and fashionable

hats, but in methods of flirtation, far ahead of her mother, which went well with her scarce-now twenty years. She immediately became chums with Beatrice Knox. She looked somewhat askance at Cecily Blount. Being familiar from childhood with her mother's free ways, she never considered them questionable, or did not seem to... She was healthy, normal, spirited, not pretty, and soon became the pet and friend of all. She could sing, dance, play the piano, do various 'stunts'; and with the Midshipman, gave the entire company a flavor of youthfulness: even the Doctor and the Chief Steward learned to skip, rejuvenated by this innoculation of girlhood buoyancy.

The Morganatic, itself, was like a landscape in a honeymoon; for the name was made to include the grounds and garden as the three huts were well outside the lawn of the house. The estate had been designed by Mr. Morgan, before the fatal illness of his wife, for a group of artists they had gathered about them... the music-room had been a studio for the painters, and the three huts for their private accommodation. When Mr. Morgan found himself alone, being left, as he was, childless and without family attachment, he had found the place too suggestive of old memories and withdrawn to the comfortable bachelorhood of the Country Club. At first he had planned to let the villa, but that would involve the dismissal of the housekeeper, Mrs. Stowe; the servants, too, had become attached to the place, and there was always the probability of return, so it was decided to keep the household together. But the

stables, the garden, the garage, were a heavy expense, to lighten which, the thrifty Mrs. Stowe hit upon the plan of a pension. Also it would not be in the hands of strangers, as all the guests were friends of Mr. Morgan who would respect his personal affection in all details. He was fond of a house full of company, perhaps more than ever in his loneliness, and without seeming to entertain in his years of mourning, this business arrangement would keep him in contact with sympathetic and clever women for whom he held a cultivated appreciation gained from a life of leisure and observation.

The villa in its architecture and grounds had been lovingly planned in reminiscence of similar estates in Italy, though the Spanish American influences in California were evident in the ornamentation of the house. For a site a rounded hill-top had been selected, the house being placed slightly below the summit which permitted the stables and farm in the rear to be out of view with their drainage toward a ravine of the mountains that cut in deep behind the hill and gave an arroyo with sycamores and polished boulders. The summit was rain-worn bared granite, but in the crevices, the short grass had found a footing, and sweet alyssum scattered everywhere through it gave a faraway, cloudland sense of spring. On the several slopes of this summit were arranged the huts, each one with two wide-windowed rooms. The house was on the broadest slope which gave toward the sea and was encircled by the terraced garden on that side, with the drive-way and its eucalyptus grove on the other, the garden extending

by three times the larger sector, on the North, the full East and South.

Within the garden, on the third terrace below the lawn of the villa where the ground fell more suddenly away was another house of much more modest proportions so sheltered in its greenery of fig trees as to be quite invisible from the larger house above. Even its gate-way overgrown with thick vines was hardly noticeable from the drive on the third terrace, so that it was not unreasonable that Sylvia should appear one afternoon in the music room where the company were having tea and startle them with her starry-eyed announcement that there was a man on board the ship.

- I was hastening along the lower terrace road, I had been down among the meadows gathering lilies, and fearing that I might be late for tea, was walking with my eyes bent on the path. Imagine my surprise when I found I was in a brick-paved court-yard, before an open door-way; and in that door-way a man was standing, smoking... a brown man - I mean his hair and beard and clothes were golden brown. He was smoking a large brown meerschaum and looked so picturesque and half laughing that I gasped out - "I beg pardon, I thought you were a picture," and then both of us had to stop and laugh.

- But there is no court-yard and no door-way on the lower terrace, breathed the Captain, fearful that the Mate had gone insane.

- So I had supposed. But the gate is quite overgrown with vines, and this time it was standing wide

open. I had followed the track, you see, and entered without noticing.

- I am disappointed to learn he had clothes on, sighed Mrs. Duke, I had made up my mind he was a merman.

- But he has no right to be on the Morganatic! thundered the Captain.

Here the Chief Steward, Letitia Swan, spoke up...

- I knew there was a studio on that terrace. I spied it out one day from the cross-trees and informed Mrs. Stowe. She said it belonged to an artist, a Mr. Plummer, and that he hung out in Algiers or some outlandish place.

- Mr. Morgan would never have another man's property right in the centre of his grounds. This studio must be on board the Morganatic, and the Man shall be landed at once.

- I think he really owns the property, put in the Chief Engineer, Charlotte Gaylord, slightly blushing. I am acquainted with Mr. Plummer. I met him two years ago in Chicago, and I have heard him speak often of the place. It seems he and Mr. Morgan are great friends. In fact, the plan was, he was to teach in their art school,

- Then he is not really on board, decided the Mate.

- Man Overboard! chirped the Midshipman... I must take a look at him. Brown, you say? I'm sorry. I prefer them black.

- I prefer all colors, proclaimed Tessie, jumping up, Come, Trix, let us cast him a line.

- Midshipman, Second Class, commanded the Captain, I must forbid your going on the lower deck. It isn't.., It isn't -

- Sanitary, suggested Mrs. Duke.

- Thank you, but it appears we have been struck amidships by an inferior craft, and her crew is washing athwart our bunkers.

- And may expose us to a contagious disease... laughed the First Class Passenger.

- I commission the Chief Steward to arrange this matter, announced the Captain, and keep the Man from scaling our mizzen. Miss Howard, did you give him any encouragement?

- Not the slightest, Sir. We only laughed, and chatted on indifferent matters: I think it was chiefly the climate and the weather.

- And did the Man say anything about returning to Algiers?

- Nothing. But he seemed to be unpacking. There was a yellow straw clinging to his beard.

- May I ask, Miss Gaylord, and all eyes were now turned to the self-conscious Engineer... Do you know of anything vicious about this Man?

- You are aware already that he smokes, began Miss Gaylord; I think he does not chew, nor go to the movies. I have known, however, of his attending one reception. I can't think of anything else.

- Is he what is called a gay deceiver?

- They all are, interrupted the Chief Steward sententiously.

- Is he one who could be frightened away by petty-coats?... in case we made a rush and altogether?

The Chief Engineer shook her head smilingly...

- He adores the sex: as they say in the old novels.

- The females! raved Letitia Swan, getting up and pacing the floor. There is nothing that riles my blood more than to read those early Victorian novels where women are called the sex and the females.

- Brown... mused the Captain... Sylvia, just what do you mean to convey by brown?

- Corduroys, I think it was. No: it must have been khaki, or tweed. Still, it had the effect of being corduroys.

- But hair, and eyes, and beard?

- Eyes, as you know are evasive. Still, his were pervasively brown.

- Light brown, or dark - I mean the beard?

- Light brown, inclined to golden... also the eyes.

- Dangerous, Matey. dangerous! Your eyes are brown, and -

- But my hair is dusty, and his was sunlit.

- Enough! Enough! No more before the young ladies. We will now discuss his real-estate-ic rights.

- There is no question as to the clearness of his title, explained the Chief Engineer. Indeed he is on his native heath. It was his father's homestead that was purchased by Mr. Morgan, this scion reserving the old farm-house for a studio, but giving option in case he ever sells. It is possible that he is planning to sell now, and this packing business portends a return to Algeria.

- Straw in the beard is almost as bad as egg: remarked the Purser; and I swear I will never marry a man with a beard, for fear some morning at breakfast.. Oh, Horrors!

They all laughed at her grimace, and the party gradually broke up, separating into pairs, save for the Doctor who went quietly back alone to her microscope.

The Midshipman and the Second Class Passenger were the first two to slip out of the room. They stole furtively across the back lawn, and descended the hill toward the eucalyptus grove.

- What a commotion about a mere man! began Tessie, I believe Miss Cody is more curious about him than any of them, although she puts up such a protest. Perhaps she is jealous of Miss Howard.

- I think Mrs. Swan is the most curious, considered Beatrice. I am always suspicious of those man-haters.

- Man-eaters would be a better name for them... sharks.

- I like men, and I don't care who knows it. And it will be pleasant to see one occasionally. Johnny and Ben are all right, but an older man will sort of keep us steady.

-Now, I won't hear a word against our boys!... We must stop at the tryst to get our cake.

- Did Mrs. Stowe ask any questions?

- Not a word more than I told her. Mother knows. She likes me to have beaux. It leaves her more free for her own flirtations.

They stopped at a large live-oak near their driveway and proceeded to take from its hollow trunk a small sponge-cake neatly wrapped in a napkin and swarming with ants, which they brushed off unconcernedly enough.

- Watch out that old cat isn't spying, warned Tessie. Keep the pepper tree between you and her window.

- She pretends she hates pepper trees. I heard her going on about them with Mr. Morgan. I believe she is trying to get him to cut them down so she can keep watch of the road.

- Not much use, I should think, when men are forbidden to come up. What a rule! As if this was a convent! All the same, you and I know how to dodge them. We haven't been in boarding-school for nothing.

- Which do you like best? asked Beatrice frankly.

- Oh, Ben: he's more boyish: and not sentimental.

- Johnny is fond of poetry... but, so am I.

- I prefer larks, said the imperturbable Tess.

- Well, you take Ben and I'll take Johnny. How stupid they have to paint in the morning!

- But moonlight walks, my dear girl, in the canyon! Anyway, you play for Cecily in the morning. As for me, I like to sleep till nine thirty. Mother says I'm lazy. I guess she's right.

By this time they had traversed the eucalyptus grove and arrived at the confines of the estate. They leaned over the low wall and looked up the narrow,

dusty road toward the mountains. Evidently they would not be disappointed, for two young artists were soon to return to their studio and a sponge-cake that was promised them for tea.

Mrs. Duke had gone upstairs with Miss Gaylord... Being fellow artists, it was natural they should be together. There were other matters besides art now that interested them, though the semblance of the theme was maintained by both. The older woman showed less reticence than the younger. Also, she had all to gain and naught to lose.

- Is this Joseph Plummer the portrait painter that was exhibiting in the Middle West some years ago? I remember a show in St. Louis.

- I think he may have exhibited there; I am not sure. He has had several shows in Chicago.

- Influenced somewhat by Whistler and Chavannes?

- I should hardly say influenced...

- I remember one, a nude asleep on a divan, her head down, her hair spread out on the rug like a shower of jewels.

- Yes: that picture created quite a sensation, though I think his portraits really better.

- I love the nude... when well painted. I suppose that is because I am a sculptor.

- I thought his handling of that one a little gummy.

- Too much sentimentalized over perhaps. but well studied. The nude should be classic, unconcious. Now I think of it I met this Mr. Plummer at a reception given

in his honnor by the Woman's Club.

- He is quite a hand to play the social game for money.

- My dear, we all must play it, if we are to get on.

- For my part I absolutely refuse. I would rather starve in my garret.

- Well you have selected a pleasant garret to starve in, I confess, I think your balcony here offers the prize view of all the windows.

- It was selfish of me to take it, I know. But I was the first here and, in a way, I helped Mrs. Stowe get the others. You would think, to hear Mrs. Swan talk, that she did it all. But she has to talk to make a showing since she is a pensioner of Mr. Morgan.

- Yes? I thought so. I know those women. Always berating the men and living off of them, and never giving anything in return; very probably because they haven't anything that the men want.

- Charlotte Gaylord was slightly shocked but not displeased.

- I wonder what she will make of her mission to Mr. Plummer? she speculated.

- Surely she won't undertake that. Miss Cody only meant it as a joke.

- Miss Cody may have her reasons, who knows, hidden from herself beneath her bluff?

- Oh, she is so conceited with her mania to be clever!..why don't you set things straight with Mr. Plummer?

- Set things straight?

- I mean, tell him we've not a hen roost of feminists up here. He can walk in our garden if he wants to.

- Oh, he has a garden of his own!

- Yes, you have been there. You have seen it.

- No, but I have heard him speak of it in Chicago. He has a court-yard and a fountain rather English.

- You surely mean to see him here to allow him to call on you. It's all piffle having these rules about men.

- I shall meet him at dinner this evening. Mr. Morgan has been thoughtful enough to ask me. But no; I prefer to let the rules stand and a man hates to be invited with a lot of women.

- I thought, from what you said, that he liked it. Well, I mean to ask him to walk with me at least and if he doesn't call here, I'll call there. I think there should be freedom among artists.

Mrs. Duke went off to her hut and decided to dress early for dinner; after that she might stroll along the lower terrace, just to show Captain Cody she was not subject to her orders except in fun.

- As for Charlotte Gaylord, for all her shyness, she said aloud, it's plain she wants to marry Joseph Plummer.

Letitia Swan did not go to the lower terrace as she had jestingly been commissioned by Captain Cody. Instead she went with Cecily Blount to her hut, for she knew that Beatrice Knox was off with Tessie and she would have the dancer to herself until dinner. Mrs. Swan was one of these nervous people who demand a companion, at least she was in one of these nervous states

which many people get into a certain period of their lives, and they are not for a moment sufficient unto themselves. It pleased her now to be with Cecily Blount, she liked to wait on her, advise her, absorb her. She was trying to write a poem on her dancing, but it was so difficult to get the rhythm that would express it. Words, adjectives, she could think of a plenty but they would not be fitted into proper rhythm. Meanwhile she could study her in her room. A Model Resting, was the title of a poem she had also in mind, but could not get beyond the first line which was:

- Psyche, resting between one thought and another.

As for Cecily Blount, she was lazy about her room, all her energy went into her dancing and she liked to have someone to pick up after her, at her bath... even to give her massage. There were no accommodations here for a maid and Cecily, though she did not admit it, could hardly afford one. She took Mrs. Swan rather impersonally, in fact looked upon her as a gossiping elderly woman. She was curious about some things about men, and Mrs. Swan was never tired of condemning men. She would even go into startling details at times which gave Cecily thrills of anticipating pleasure. For, though a dancer, Cecily still waited her first admirer, but then, she had not yet made her debut.

- Are you going down to warn that man to keep off our grounds as the Captain commissioned you? she asked laughingly.

- I may accept the commission, replied Mrs. Swan. but I propose to sail my own course in going about it

- And?

- I shall speak to Mr. Morgan, of course, and he will give the other to understand.

- The other?

- Mr. Plummer, of course, I hate his name. Mr. Swan, you know, was a sanitary engineer and they always called him the plumber.

- But this plumber is probably a gentleman.

- My dear girl, all men are gentlemen at the beginning. But when they get a woman in their power they are brutes.

Cecily thrilled with the thought of taking the risk. but she only said to Mrs. Swan:

- You can't very well tell Mr. Morgan to ask his friend not to live in his own house.

- Oh, I am not such a ninny as that. But let him keep to his own house, is all I wish. It is awkward having a house in our garden. I suppose he will be smirking at the gate.

- Miss Howard seemed to find him quite agreeable, and Miss Gaylord seems to know him very well. She has been invited by Mr. Morgan to have dinner with him.

- Has she? Well, it's curious Mr. Morgan did not ask me too. I have always been asked before with Charlotte.

- It was probably out of consideration for Mr. Plummer. Friends, you know. Did she say his name was William?

- Now Miss Cecily, be it said by way of veracity,

had heard very distinctly his name was Joseph. She had even been going over the diminutives in her mind. Joe, Josey, Joey. She threw out Joey. It did not go with a beard. She was glad that he wore a beard but wished it were yellow.

- Joseph and be damned to him, snapped Mrs. Letitia.

- What was Mr. Swan's name? You never told me said Cecily carefully covering her back.

- Joe. Joe Swan. How I hate it. Think of me Mrs. Joe Swan. Ugh! I wish I'd taken back my maiden name. But it didn't have the right balance for a poet.

- What was it?

- Fawcett. It's my curse to be lined up with plumbing. Even now I am wiping a joint.

She was engaged in rubbing alcohol on the dancer's white knee.

- Letitia Fawcett, sounded Miss Blount.

-Not musical, is it? croaked the poetess, but Letitia Swan has smooth sailing at least.

- It's beautiful. You must dedicate your first volume to me. Cecily Blount, Letitia Swan. The names sound well together.

- I wonder how well Charlotte knows this man? She has never peeped about him to me. I'll bet dollars to doughnuts she's met Mr. Morgan through him. I must ask her how she came to know Morgan.

- I should think Mr. Morgan would have told you. You knew him years before he met Miss Gaylord, didn't you?

- Yes but not intimately, I couldn't get along with his wife.

- I wonder if Mr.Plummer is married.

- Depend upon it, he has wives enough in Europe. Maybe not by benefit of clergy

- One can only have one by benefit of clergy, can't one? and Miss Cecily put out the other knee.

- Plummer, Plummer, no; I have never heard her or Mr. Morgan, speak of Plummer, but he always talks literature to me.

- Maybe he will help you publish your first volume.

- Maybe. Mrs. Swan's voice was sarcastic.

- I understand he is very helpful to some artists.

- My dear Cecily, and Mrs. Letitia stood straight up. The men will give you bed and board if there is no sacrifice. But your clothes and your art... no never so much as a cent.

- Now I have been told it was just those things they would give.

- To a dancer, maybe, not to a poet.

- But he likes your poems. He told me.

- Liking and paying are two different things. But it's sly of Charlotte not to tell me of this Plummer.

- Put him out of your thoughts, said Cecily soothingly. But she stowed him away cosily in hers. She resolved to take a ramble to night, by moonlight; and she would stroll down the lower terrace road about ten. Or would he return with Miss Gaylord in the motor? She decided on the whole he would walk. It was a short cut from the public road up to his studio.

- So we are to have a romance after all for my novel, began Miss Cody puffing lazily at her cigarette.

- The man, you mean, Cora? asked Sylvia.

- The man and Miss Gaylord, of course. I wondered what brought her all the way from Chicago?

- Might he not have stopped there on his way from New-York if there were a romance, as you say, on the carpet.

- My darling, you are too generous altogether. It is Charlotte who has set her cap for Joe. For a dollar I'd enter the course against Charlotte.

- Confess, Cody, you are simply pining for a flirtation, having deprived yourself of men's society for a week.

- It's nine days and three quarters, Sylvia dear.

- Then it will be ten days by tomorrow. You will hardly visit him this evening, I fancy.

- I'd make you take me down there this instant if all those females weren't watching. You could say you had dropped your handkerchief or something.

- Is that all your imagination can furnish... for your novel?

- Now you mention the novel, I must pause Would a rampant flirtation with a rival thrown in be favorable or derogatory to the novel.

- Why write a poem when you can live one?

- There speaks the woman, Matey, but never the artist. No, let little Charlotte have her fling.

- Are you so sure of the machinations of Miss Gaylord?

- Matey, didn't you see her color and hesitate? I know women, the sex, I should say too well. Damn that old hoyden, Mrs. Swan, I wish she wouldn't swear. Swearing should be indulged in only by ladies.

- Are you going to deny gentlemen their sustenance?

- Gentlemen and men swear,of course, but females should be ladies if they take to blasphemy. Otherwise, they are despicably low and vulgar.

- I do feel she's trespassing on your rights, dear.

- As is also our Chief Engineer, not that Miss Gaylord swears, my dear, but she is jealous because I was chosen Captain. I feel like cutting her hero to be even. Is he handsome, Matey? Speak to me honest.

- He is handsome as a big blond beast. I swear it.

- Stupid or pert?

- Stupid, except for his eyes.

- Give me a stupid man with eyes, for a flirtation I mean, a husband should be pig-eyed.

- He has a smile, Cody.

- Now, here, no love making for y ou. You are not yet recovered from your recent affair.

- Oh, Cody!

- I mean it. Though it was brutal of me to mention it. I am brutal. But if I thought, Matey, you were goIng to fall for this blond beast I would wish you back in New-York in a minute.

. Never fear, Cody, I was egging you on.

-Those women will swarm down there like flies. You and I will stick to the quarter deck, Matey.

- Like two goddesses we will rail at the weaknesses of mortals.

- Goddesses have been in trouble before you.

- Maybe he will take the role of a god. He didn't impress me as one that would run after women.

- But women will run after him, What won't women run after if it wears trousers? And Lady Charlotte is no exception, I can tell you. She'll play on his pity, I know her kind. Did he give evidence of any bowels of compassion?

- Nary a bowel, Cody. He is vain.

- That's just as bad, for vanity induces pity if persistent. From self-pity, it transfers the vice to others.

- I marvel you do not light on Mrs. Duke.

- Oh, she will cast her life-preserver, of course. But Miss Charlotte will try him with a drag net.... dark hair dressed low, and unshed tears. I wonder she has not landed him already. Probabably he fled to Africa to escape, and now, like all fools, returns again.

- You'd better bind a wet towel on your head and finish your novel before morning. I foresee it will be all up with literature after this.

- Now you know, Matey, when I talk I don't act. I am going out on the dog watch to take an observation.

- And I will remain in larboard bow to read. I wonder what Mrs. Duke will wear tonight?

- Watermelon vines with pumpkins in her hair. Hooray and a tiger for the Middle West.

And this is what Sylvia Howard thought at her

book as her gaze soon sought the window:

How beautiful, how exquisitely beautiful, is this place! I wonder why Cody is so excited? Now, I think Charlotte Gaylord is very nice, but I wouldn't whisper a word to Cody, she's so jealous. I really wish however, she liked more women. She likes Beatrice Knox and Tessie, but we all do. I like, even, Mrs. Swan. Cody would say, that's against her. I don't like Miss Blount though, so there! Well, it's a pity a man should come in and set up such a commotion. And nobody except me has even seen him yet. And I am the one that is really undisturbed Marion Cody is always that way. But the trouble with her is, she doesn't get over it. Some people are a flash in the pan, but she is one continual gunpowder-plot. And she will like Mr. Plummer, I am sure. He is of that active indolent type that peculiarly aggravates her. She won't rest till she has him trailing at her skirts; and he looks the kind that stubbornly refuses to trail. He would show up very handsome at her feet, but Cody should marry a slender, lisping blond. This one is too burly, too brown. I imagine he has spent much of his time at sea... Oh, the sea, how wonderful it is today!.. a prairie of turquoise and emerald that extends to the remote Pacific islands! Cody and I must go to Samoa before we marry. I can't think of my Captain married but she will be: no doubt she will be married and have a family before I so much as find another admirer. I hope she will get a banker, or a broker: something solid that sticks to his office hours, and furnishes plenty

for dress. She will have her royalties beside, but they will go for jewels and pin money. Dear old Captain, you will sail some stormy seas, once aboard your really royal frigate. He won't do, Mr. Plummer... he really won't. I must make Cody believe Miss Gaylord hates him...

Thus she drifted on in her thoughts, over the placid mystery of the horizon.

Marion Cody, sitting on the dog watch, a name they had given to a boulder that commanded the point of their hill and looked east and southward over the wide sea, Marion Cody was thinking more about Sylvia Howard than she was of the characters and plot of her novel...

- Little Sylvia is taken with that man!... She cast an indignant look toward the fig trees that concealed his studio. I can tell by that under-light in her eyes; I have seen it before and have good cause to remember. Fortunately, Sydney Latham was wheedled away by that wax-faced baby-doll, Sally Moyne. He never would have made Sylvia happy... Never! I wish she would give up poets and artists and fall in love with a steady-going, conventional creature; not a business-man, they are too crude, but a clergyman, or a college professor. The trouble with clergymen is, they are such a flock of sap-heads, and college professors havn't enough juice in them to make a frappé. Oh, the men, the men, the men! If clever men were only half as plentiful as clever women! But when you do encounter a clever one, he's nasty. This Plummer

one is probably nasty. They always manage to cover it up till they have hooked Sylvia. Sylvia is such a guileless little saint, herself, that she thinks all the men are what they think they are. I must nip this Plummer bud with a frost; A drouth may be more effective with him. I know the artist type: egotistic, cruel, suave. I think I shall make him love me instead. That will save Sylvia, amuse me - and give him what he deserves. Yes, that was my intuition the moment I saw that light in her eyes. I am never far wrong in my intuition. Sylvia is a dear, and must be saved.

Still another woman was gazing at the sea, and that was the Doctor who sat in her room over her microscope. She had her table in front of her window for the light, and she had but to lift her head to get the view. She was working on investigations of the diatom: a monograph on their individuality, or display of self-will as especially evidenced in reproduction.

Priscilla Maxwell was one of that numerous group of women who have taken up the higher education. Endowed with keen wits, a modest income and an untiring energy she had been, at the age of eighteen, an exceedingly sparkling fresh graduate. Almost imperceptibly to herself, she had grown sharp and thin with years of study and teaching in a girls' college, till finding herself at forty an 'old maid', she had resigned her position in a moment of panic and struck out in the world in search of adventure. Unfortunately, adventure, like valor, flees away from those who go out especially to seek it. Indeed, should it chance to en-

counter her (in the form of some college professor) it would not recognize her prim ways and severe person as a favorable culture. She had not been with men, she had scarcely thought of men for twenty years. Even before that age, she had not experienced a genuine passion. At forty a great timidity overcame her which speedily gave way to alarm. All the life-forms she had been working with in biology seemed so interestingly intent on reproduction that she had forgotten to apply the principle to her own organization, which now was fast approaching its climacteric. The scientific men she was now thrown with in the laboratories and the societies of which she soon became a member, were either not interested in these problems themselves or did not correlate them with her particular person. So it came, after five years of futile waiting, she had gone into retirement in California. She had been in this region two more years and scarcely knew a man in all her acquaintance for more than a polite conversation. Not rich enough to attract a mercenary bachelor, not poor enough to need to seek a husband, there was little stimulus other than the sexual to give her effort, and that had been so long denied or smothered that it could not direct her in any mode of action, though at the disconsolate age of forty seven seemed giving her more unhappiness than she deserved, as her neglect of it had never been intentional.

She was not unattractive - quite the contrary. She had a refined face, an exceedingly alert and lithe graceful carriage... In repose, she was a bit meaningless,

pedagogical, but on foot or on horseback, she had motion and a style that was as girlish as Miss Knox, a bird-like lightness that even Tessie could not rival.

She had accepted the horse-play, or rather the ship-play of the Morganatic somewhat scornfully. On the whole, she was indifferent to the question of men. But now when the electric shock had gone through the group that there was one at their very ship's side, as it were, she had experienced its thrill as much as any, and though she tried to keep her eyes on her microscope, they were constantly playing truant on the sea. She did not look toward the fig trees, like Miss Cody. She would have thought such glances brazen, unfeminine. But she did look out, far out to the horizon, and wide visions, as from flight, were in her soul.

CHAPTER III
The Passengers

Breakfast on board the Morganatic was usually a state-room affair. The cabin stewardesses, Blanche and Rose brought coffee and rolls to the huts if requested. Miss Knox, however, with midshipman-like modesty usually saved them that trouble and came over to join the Engineer and the Doctor in the dining-room where eggs could be boiled and toast made over the alcohol lamp on the table. It was the custom of the poetess to sleep late and have her coffee brought to her bed. But the following morning seemed to make a general change, for it was Miss Gaylord who took her coffee in bed; and the Chief Steward and all the hut occupants assembled bright and early in the dining-room. As they moved about freely between table and sideboard, the conversation was frequently desultory and interrupted.

- Why doesn't Charlotte come down and tell us about her dinner party? fumed Mrs. Swan. Usually

she's up with the sunrise.

- What dinner party was that? asked Miss Cody.

- Why, I thought everybody knew! sighed the poetess, rolling this delicious bit of gossip beneath her tongue. She was invited alone to dine with Mr. Morgan of course the Man was to be of the party.

- The Plummer? Captain Cody would be facetious.

- He shows a judgment of plums if he picks Charlotte, it was Midshipman Beatrice who made this comment.

- I wish she'd hurry and tell us what he is like. Cecily Blount was quite steaming with interest.

- She's a prejudiced witness, odserved the Captain. She's known him since he wore pinafores, I fancy.

- Two years, Sir, corrected the Chief Steward.

- Long enough to know his babyhood tricks just the same, said the Captain coldly.

- Now, I told you all yesterday, complained Sylvia, and neither am I a prejudiced witness. Brown hair, brown eyes, brown beard, brown corduroys, brown stockings: a symphony in brown, as Whistler puts it.

- He might be altogether different in a dinner coat. Black and white might take all his symphonies from him, said Captain Cody.

- I don't know what he might be in clothes, said Mrs. Irene Duke, the First Class Passenger, with deliberate mischief. But I can give you a description of him without them, for when I called he was taking his bath.

- You called? they all gasped but not one of them asked for the description which the sculptor none the less

gave.

- Skin rosy but not ruddy, of fine texture, a manly figure, slightly rounded in the shoulders, a stalwart chest, well braced loins, and sinewy legs. His striking characteristic is the poise of his head, something indolent and with all that of defiance.

- I did not know you were given to sea bathing so early in the morning, remarked Captain Cody somewhat coldly.

- Sea bathing not at all. A dip in his own fountain in his court-yard. It was last evening, he was dressing for dinner. In order that the company may not be utterly shocked, I will state that before stepping forward to receive me he had the propriety to put on a pink bath robe and gird a long towel around his waist. Also he slipped on some bamboo sandals. I assure you he was a symphony in pink and gold.

The pause gave way to dead silence, but Mrs. Duke was not perturbed and went on.

- I had used up my modeling wax on my figure and it occured to me that possibly he might have some. It is so trying to wait the express from Los Angeles.

- But he didn't, smiled Miss Cody cuttingly.

- To my own surprise he actually did. I have already used up the half of it. He doesn't model himself, but he had a friend there once who left some. I am really the luckiest woman in the world.

- Evidently he is not the luckiest man, to be interrupted at so inopportune a moment.

- Oh, he saw I was a sculptor and didn't mind. He

really is a very charming fellow.

- So it appears... to take one's bath in the front yard must imply a man of some charm.

One of the maids came for Miss Gaylord's coffee, and Mrs. Swan urgently offered to take it up. She was eager to tell the news to dear Charlotte and while loth to miss the conversation in the dining-room she rightly judged from the frigidity of the temperature that the party would soon be broken up.

- How fortunate I got up early, she was congratulating herself. I was sure that something would be brewing. I must talk to Cecily afterward and perhaps the Doctor. The Captain shows signs of a storm.

Charlotte Gaylord had been awake for two hours musing over the events of last evening. She awoke with the joyous thought that Joe was the same as she had known him two years ago and sobered down to seriously considering how he was different. There was even more of that musical quality of affection in his voice. There was more of that upward appeal in his shining eyes. He was more attentive to her than he had ever been before, but it was with tenderness of reminiscence rather than of the present. Still, he was considerate of the present for her too. Where was it that he was so puzzlingly different?

She tried to go over all that he had been when they had studios adjoining each other. First he had been formal, gracious, shy, that was one stage she always felt sure of. Then came the merry stage, half boisterous, he had been rude oftentimes and of course she

had been offended. Men have no right to be rude to a woman. Yes she had stood up for her rights... He had always met her withdrawal with assured indifference, though she knew he really cared. That proved he was looking to the future, and it gave her pleasure because she already loved him. No, she was not a heroine in an old-fashioned novel who dared not be in love before the proposal. She was a heroine in a modern novel instead, though she would have been enraged if anyone had told her so. Anyway she had liked Joe when he was rough and it was in that stage that she began to call him Joe. Before he had been Mr. Plummer. In that stage she had thought Gaylord a pretty name.

Then came the day when he had found her crying and she had confessed to him that she could not pay her rent. He had no money at that time either but he took her handkerchief and wiped her eyes and they went and pawned his gold watch... and yes he had given her a kiss. Of this stage she was never quite sure. Did he love her? Did she really love him? During that stage it was more as if they had been brother and sister. It was when he began to flirt with Genevieve that she began to love him, and yes... that was a humiliating period. Everybody said she was jealous. But it wasn't jealousy it was indignation at his treason. It was treason in Genevieve, too, who had been her dearest friend. In that stage she coveted the name of Charlotte Plummer. She wanted to flourish his card in that brazen wretch's face, even though she cast it in the mud a moment after. Then he had come to California.

They had not written. Then a year abroad, and now they were here.

She had followed on his trail. She had yearned for it. But she had not followed him. His arrival was a surprise. What she longed to know was whether he had followed her.

As she went over each detail of the dinner party... she concluded that he did not know himself. He knew now that she loved him. That was in his looks. Perhaps he got it from hers. No matter! She had thrown that modesty to the winds. She was quite reckless. She would play with an open hand. And his cards were they also on the table? It was as if they were and he realized she had lost and he was sorry for her, almost till he loved her.

At this point she was thinking of his eyes, of that earnest attentive graciousness and formal sympathy. She gave herself a long time to dwell on this and then she called down the speaking tube and asked Blanche to bring her coffee and then, in came Mrs. Swan bustling and sympathetic.

- The scandal of the season! she began. Mrs. Duke yesterday afternoon, as soon as she heard that man was there, went down to his studio on some pretext or other and surprised him while he was taking a bath in the fountain, and what does she do but walk in and talk to him just the same.

Miss Gaylord smiled placidly as she sipped her coffee, while the Steward enlarged on the conversation in the dining room.

- Was Miss Blount there? she finally asked.

- Cecily? Oh yes. But only Miss Cody talked. The rest of us were gasping, positively gasping.

- I am sure Mrs. Duke enjoyed the effect. She loves to create a sensation. If she could only do it with her art as well as she does with society, she would be a great success, as would Miss Cody.

- But aren't you horrified Charlotte? Appalled? I don't belong to society but when I picture that man really the blood runs cold in my veins.

- He is not a monster, said Miss Gaylord irritably. I don't see why anyone should be horrified. Evidently Mrs. Duke was not. Was Miss Blount horrified also?

- Cecily? I haven't seen her alone. Of course we didn't speak of it in the dining room. Miss Maxwell simply rose and left the room. You'd have thought she was walking in a trance.

- I think people don't usually walk in trances.

- Ha! Ha! But I admire the cool way you take it. You don't show even astonishment. You're wonderful.

- The fact is, I heard the story last night. Mr. Plummer told it at the table. He made it seem very amusing. Of course neither of them lose anything in the telling.

- Wasn't Mr. Morgan shocked?

- Mr. Morgan likes a good story as well as any. Mr. Quinn was interested psychologically.

- The Misogynist, was he there too?

- Miss Cody's nickname is becoming into general use.

- For my part I don't think it fits him either. I think he is shy... Sleek and shy. But the Misogynist is such a good word to say. It rolls so deliciously under the tongue.

- Miss Cody no doubt, thinks that if a man dislikes her he also dislikes all other women.

- But the Misogynist doesn't dislike the Captain. He always seeks her out at a party. And wasn't he up yesterday to take her out riding and isn't she invited to his study for tea today?

- Perhaps that is because he is psychological or perhaps, as you suggest, he is sleek and shy.

- Well sleek doesn't describe his outward appearance, fuzzy hair, fuzzy beard, fuzzy manners.

- What does Miss Blount think of him?

- Cecily? Oh, she finds him charming. For my part, I can't see 'charming' in any man. Though he is a good talker when he wants to be.

- I wonder if she finds Mr. Plummer charming.

- Why, she has not seen him. He only came yesterday!

- She was waiting for him last night on the road up to his studio. Unfortunately he had asked me to walk up with him, and we sent the car up the front drive alone.

The Steward gave a long, musical whistle. The note had better quality than her voice.

- Well! she exclaimed at the end. The shy little minx! I declare!

- We all three had a pleasant walk home in the

moonlight. Of course it was I she came out to meet.

- Did she seem to like him? asked Letitia Swan with some anxiety.

- She was spirited. Unusually so for the occasion.

- Moonlight drives her mad with joy. It does me. It's curious though she didn't take me with her.

- No doubt she will give you a good reason.

- Oh, yes. I must go and see her. Are you tired?

- Only lazy. I shall soon be getting up.

- They all missed you at breakfast, they did really. Do you know, I think they all came to hear about that man.

- Well, it seems that Mrs. Duke did not allow them to be disappointed.

- It's simply wonderful how you take it, simply wonderful.

- Why, I am not married to him! Miss Gaylord was somewhat nettled.

- It was not him, dear, I was thinking of: it was the ladies.

- I think the ladies can take care of themselves.

- Well, certainly Irene Duke can and Tessie. For my part I wish they were out of the house. They don't fit in with the rest of us at all. They have no literary taste whatever.

- You'd better find out what Miss Blount thinks about it.

- Cecily? Yes. I must go and see. You don't want any more coffee?

- No, thank you, dear. But when Mrs. Swan was

gone she called down the tube to Blanche for another cup.

- Did you ever hear of such an outrageous performance? began the Steward as she stalked into Cecily Blount's room where the other occupant of the hut was also visiting, both girls extended on the window seats.

- We were just talking about it, said Beatrice Knox. Cecily and I have decided it is only funny.

- Do you mean to say, you would walk in on a man at his bath?

- He needn't have been taking it in the front yard. He knew there might be ladies passing by.

- But not calling! He had the gate shut.

- Evidently it wasn't locked, or Mrs. Duke couldn't have walked in.

- She ought to have turned away at once.

- That would have ended the affair much more awkwardly than it turned out.

- Do you mean to say that you - gasped, Mrs. Swan

- Oh, that is another matter. I should have screamed... fainted... gone into epilepsy... anything. But I admire Mrs. Duke's courage all the same.

- Or her presence of mind, put in Cecily,

- Do you stand up for such performances, too, Cecily? Well, I am finding you out! And to go down there at ten o'clock. Why didn't you call me if you wanted to take a walk?

- One likes to be alone when one meets a man, of course I mean if the man is a gentleman. Cecily put a bold face on the matter.

- What? Have you seen him too? bantered Miss Beatrice.

- I thought they would come up that way and I went down to meet Charlotte, said Cecily coldly.

- But, my dearie, don't you know they are in love with each other?

- What if they are? I was not going to break their engagement.

- They aren't engaged... an old boy-and-girl affair. Calf love. I've had it myself, remarked the poetess. Unfortunately Mr. Swan did not go to Algiers and I, like a blooming idiot, let him marry me.

- What is he like? asked Miss Beatrice.

- What is he like! My God what is he like! Hear her! Mrs. Swan walked the floor in a rage. As if there weren't fifty million others on this continent! As if they weren't all alike... hairy, lascivious, brutal, making low jokes about the most sacred things in nature. Ugh! you make me sick. You make me sick. I can't breathe here. Why don't you air your bed?

She seized on the coverlets of this article of furniture and spread them and the sheets out in the sun.

- Do Beatrice's too, Letitia, called Miss Blount through the window, but Mrs. Swan was so enraged she would not heed her but walked away in high dudgeon toward the stables.

In her excitement she hardly realized that she was leaving the villa grounds and entering on the domain reserved by Mr. Morgan, for he still retained his horses for his own use. Allowing only a pony phaeton for

Mrs.Stowe.

When Mrs. Swan discovered the Man there, for she immediately recognized him as the object of her hatred, she realized that he was not on the Ship and she had no legal right to accost him. Indeed even though her temerity had gone so far she would hardly have had time to do so, for he was at that moment leaving the stable yard, seated jauntily on one of Mr. Morgan's horses and leading two others, both saddled. In short the men had planned a morning ride and as the artist was at hand in his studio he had offered to take the horses to the club and leave the grooms free for other duties. He had skirted the garden by means of a path on the lower terrace and so left its denizens uninterrupted.

- Handsome he is! said the poetess in admiration. But the handsome ones are the most troublesome of all. At least I'll have Miss Maxwell left for sane companionship and she continued on her feministic walk alone.

Had she been two minutes earlier at the stable she would not have felt so secure about the Doctor. For Miss Maxwell having need of some stable refuse for certain mould cultures, had encountered the man in the yard, and while the grooms were saddling the horses, had kept up a conversation with the artist with a sprightliness that she had hardly thought herself capable. Now that she was safely back in her room she was lying on a couch reviewing the scene and its impressions. He was certainly a very courteous gentleman, old fashioned, and given somewhat to formal speeches, but gallant and

debonair and polished and with a thrill of joy she reflected, he was not too young. Forty and over surely she was saying. - And I don't look a day older myself.

It was impossible that she could rationalize this gentleman with the shocking statements Mrs. Duke had made at breakfast. So, with scientific accuracy, she ruled out that evidence on the grounds that Mrs. Duke was another vulgar woman in the 'pension' to oppose her, for Dr. Maxwell had little love for Miss Cody... a slangy, smoking, swearing, newspaper-woman, was what she thought of her, though she always kept such thoughts to herself. She overlooked Miss Cody's foibles, partly out of deference to Miss Howard, whom she genuinely liked, and partly because she was not naturally troubled by women, having been accustomed to deal with all sorts.

Oddly enough, the Doctor liked Mrs. Swan, who had all the vices of Miss Cody in a much more irascible form. Her voice was louder and more strident, her blasphemy coarser, her smoking and drinking more uncultivated as to taste and enjoyment. She gossiped more, she tried to manage people more, and still the Doctor liked her and was her friend. It was not unnatural therefore that Mrs. Swan should tap at her door an hour later after having finished the valiant charge of her promenade. It was a little bit unnatural, however, that Miss Maxwell should hastily rise from her reverie and busily bend over her empty microscope before calling out sweetly for the poetess to come in.

- You are the real comfort of this place, she began

mildly. Your work at least is not all upset by the appearance of a man in the neighborhood,

- I was about to put in my new slides. Would you like to see these newly mounted diatoms?

The poetess sat down to the microscope with the genuine enthusiasm of her nature.

- Oh, my dear, she remarked after she had finished the series, I wish I could arrange my work the way you do. But poetry is so different from science. Now, yesterday, I had an idea for a delicate little pastel of a rose petal. Just a single petal that had fallen on the walk, and a white kitten was touching it with its little paw. Well, I got the first two lines to my liking, and then, what should come into my room but a smell of fried onions from the kitchen? Now all I could get out of that rose petal was fried onions, fried onions, fried onions. The kitten smelled the onions just as I did, and went off to the kitchen to gorge itself. How is one going to make a poem of fried onions where one has only their smell?

- You should ask the cook to close the back stairs door.

- Precisely what I did, but that set me gabbling with the cook. She is a nice body who married a Spaniard because he was handsome, and he spent her money and now has left her in the lurch.

- I should think he had her in the lurch when he was spending her money and now she might congratulate herself on her freedom.

- Precisely what I took an hour to tell her, but she

only smiles and says I don't understand life. I, a poet, have her, a cook, tell me that I don't understand life. How can I think of rose petals after that?

- Why not take your tablet out to a seat in the garden and write there? The weather is so secure in this climate.

- Precisely what I am planning to do. But I must have a table. I can't joggle out a poem on my knee. I must have a table and sit upright or I can't think.

- You should have taken one of the huts while they were still vacant.

- That is what I planned to do at the beginning, but the huts are all arranged for two tenants. If I could only have an entire hut to myself, one room for my study and one for my bed. But I simply can not work when I know there is some person near me, with only a partition between us. No matter how I may love the person, no matter how quiet and sympathetic she may be: in fact the more sympathetic she is and the more I love her, the more she intrudes herself into my mind. That is the reason that I took the back corner room here in the house. The maids are all down stairs in the morning. But you must remember that the drive way is just under my window and that means a constant interruption. The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, all go wheeling by and they call out, and I get them in my poem. If Mother Goose had not been already written I could do that and have my themes constantly before me, though I don't remember any fried onions in Mother Goose. I wonder how the authoress

escaped them.

- Try the garden... comforted the Doctor after a laugh. Come, I will help you carry out this sewing table for your papers.

- My dear, I must have a table that doesn't jiggle. Poetry, like science, must be built up on a stable foundation. Now, you have a beautiful table here. But I wouldn't take it from you for the world. Anyway I prefer my own roll-top desk. I like to draw down the cover, lock it, and know my papers will be untouched when I am gone. If I had my roll-top desk now in the garden, say on the lower terrace out of hearing and feeling of the house! But now, there has come in that man.

- Man? queried Miss Maxwell quite innocently.

- Artist, name Plummer, or some such. Wasn't the First Class Passenger disgusting this morning and didn't the Captain put her jolly well where she belonged?

- I was talking with Miss Knox about music. I fancy you take Mrs. Duke too seriously.

- My dear, I have to take people seriously, people are the material of the writer. Mrs. Duke now is my diatom. I have her under my microscope. Can't you understand how I am harried?

- Try a telescope and set the little end toward her. You will then get a better sense of scale.

- If I had such an instrument, it would make my fortune. I need something of the sort to shut people out. That's the trouble with me, everything keeps

crowding in. People are so interesting, and I have them all around me. I think this group of people that we have here is the most intensely interesting thing that ever happened. Each one is the subject for an epic. Each moment of each one is the motive for a lyric. Contrasts, varieties, shades... I am confused with this plethora of riches. Oh, for a desert island and a table, and just one person for one moment and no more! I could write on that moment for a year.

- Write a poem on my diatoms, on this one. Look at it. Is it not an inspiration? Look! There are the two cells approaching each other. What force is it that draws them together?

- Now that is too much! laughed the Chief Steward. If you asked me to look in the microscope with one eye and keep my other on my tablet for writing, I might do it. But now you suggest analogy, metaphor... all the meetings I have ever known go charging through my brain.

- Some critic has said, it is not what the author puts in, but what he leaves out, that makes a work of art, or destroys it.

- That's it! That's it precisely! I'll remember what you said about the garden, and perhaps I can get the gardener to build me a table if I can find the proper place. If only I could have the lower terrace, but after all, that Man can't occupy it all. I'll go down and look the ground over. He's out now. I saw him ride off from the stables. Three horses, men's saddles, Mr. Morgan and probably the Misogynist, I hear they're

old friends. Well, goodbye, dear; you're a wonder, and no mistake. And I'll try to do a poem on the diatom. I'll do it in free verse: it's more scientific... though diatom is a new rhyme for roam; we used to have to limp along with home... and that was an aggravation, for the reader always anticipated the sense. Of course there was loam, but unpoetic... always with a strong flavor of manure, or mud, if the tears should fall on it.

The Doctor laughed, still busy with her microscope, and the Chief Steward drifted restlessly away.

Captain Cody, as usual, spent an exciting day, which had, also as usual, militated against the progress of her novel. From breakfast till lunch, she had consumed her energy inveighing against the forwardness of Mrs. Duke. From lunch till four o'clock, she had been concerned with her toilette for the tea party at the Misogynist's. She had discovered the freckles coming out again on her nose, and they alone occupied a good hour of attention. Then she had been all aflurry in the car as they drove thither wondering whether the Man would be present; but this was altogether on account of Sylvia, who had been listless and dreamy the whole morning.

- It is the landscape that is getting into my veins.. Sylvia had explained in response to her friend's remonstrance. It is a veritable honeymoon of Nature... The sea, the hills, the meadows, are so ecstatic!

- Sylvia, you must not wear pink. It is childish,

and Mr. Morgan does not like it.

- I thought you liked me in pink, hesitated Sylvia slightly breathless.

- What I like, and what the men like, are two opposites. Wear your pongee with the brown velvet. It is more suitable.

Sylvia donned the garment as instructed; but stuck a bunch of carnations in her belt.

- Nasturtiums would be better, criticised the Captain.

- Oh, their juice is too drippy, objected Sylvia...

And Marion knew when her criticism should stop.

The tea party over... The Man had been there... they had yet to go through the ceremony of dinner on board. - There is more ceremony with only women, said Miss Cody, especially with women who are inclined to take liberties, like Mrs. Duke. After coffee, the pair retired to their hut... to rest, as Captain Cody explained... but in reality the day's exercise was but beginning, for she had to give a satisfactory analysis of the motives of all the people she had met, and she had to do this with some display of wit and wisdom. This she could only do when she talked; for with Miss Cody all thinking meant talking. Her novels were but the record of her own spoken comment: their weakness being that without the spirited presence of their author they were apt to be insipid and without point. But in person, she had a vitality that was electric. Her tall, commanding figure, her mobile features, rich voice, haughty carriage and gay recklessness, were enough to

make the most insipid utterances savory. Moreover, she did say clever things, gay and trenchant; and her rich laughter always kept them from seeming cattish. She could growl, she could spit, even scratch, but with a physiological majesty of manner that gave the effect of the play of a tiger's kitten, a Royal Bengal, born of the supremacy of tropical forests. Her very physique made her generous and hearty. She had the contentment of an intellectual athlete.

- I like your Man, she began her peroration, But the nucleus of his nature, I suspect, is treachery.

- Why do you call him my Man? laughed Sylvia.

- Well, you found him, didn't you?... sporting in the waves outside our taff-rail?

- He was pulling excelsior out of a packing case. It was the First Class Passenger who saw him sporting in the waves.

- Don't speak to me of that execrable woman. I can't abide her, Matey. You'll throw me into a temper.

- We'll return to the Man without the waves... How did you find him as a conversationalist? Or, as a listener?... I noticed you were talking the most of the time.

- Is that anything out of the ordinary? I saw you were very partial to the Misogynist.

- I like to talk to him. He is an excellent listener He actually pays attention to what I say.

- Not so the Man. He is different. He takes a personal interest in 'the sex'. He was not thinking of what I was talking about. He was trying to get at my

motive underneath.

- And did you have a motive, Captain Cody?

- Of course I did. Every woman has a motive. You don't think me unfeminine, do you, Matey?

- And what was your motive in this case?

- Why, to find out if he was true to Miss Gaylord, our Chief Engineer! There has been a romance between them of some three years standing.

- Don't you think you are exacting a great deal when you expect to find anyone true to a romance after the third year?

- Well, he has been two years abroad; and you know, in the words of the poet...

Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

- That's for the heart left behind. The one that has change, soon grows callous.

- To complete the sentiment as well as the couplet:

Absence makes the heart grow fonder
In the one who does not wander.

- Don't Cody. I wish you wouldn't do doggerel. What were you talking about so brilliantly with the Man?

- Did I appear brilliant, truly, Matey?

- You always do that, Cody. You were more scintillating than is your custom.

- You are a little admirer, and no joke. But it

wasn't so much what I said that is significant. You have heard the same things many times. It was what the Man thought, and what I think he thought that matters.

- Did you tell him the story of the seven virgins?

- Yes, and the one of the false teeth and the cow. But, Matey, it was wasted breath but for Mr. Morgan, and I think he has heard them both before, though he was gentleman enough to vow that he hadn't.

- Yes, you told him both of them the first night. And he heard you tell the seven virgins to the Misogynist. Really, Cody, you ought to keep a memorandum of your stories,

- Anyway they are good stories, and I try to tell them different.

- You don't, Cody, you use the same words.

- That is because I have perfected them as works of art. But they didn't catch the man. He was all the time puzzling me out,

- If he solved you, it is more than I can do.

- I mean he was trying to get at my weaknesses. Was I sensitive to the darts of Cupid for instance? Had I scars on my heart or an open wound? Or did I scorn men as my manner would imply?

- Did your manner imply that? I thought you scorned the Misogynist.

- It is a very different thing, Matey, for a man to scorn women, and for a woman to scorn men. The former takes on umbrage of a vice, and the latter is a bright and shining virtue.

- And did you decide the Man was virtuous or vicious?

- Virtuous, my love, over virtuous. In fact he makes a vice of the virtue.

- Then you decided he is untrue to Miss Gaylord.

- Not so speedy, Matey dear, not so precipitous.

- You must not forget that the basis of the masculine heart is self vanity and that the strongest influence on their emotions is sentimentality.

- Then after all, he will be faithful.

- You are violent, darling, positively you are violent. You must dwell more on the subtleties, the shades of passion. Since you force me to bluntness however, she loves him more than ever, poor fool, more because she can not get him, I fancy, than because of her belief in his actual worth. He knows that she loves him, and the knowledge tickles his vanity... well, you have seen a cat play with a mouse; it has bitten. In the end will the mouse eat the cat?.. you understand me.

- She is a dear mouse. I like Charlotte Gaylord. I think the man is a beast.

- Mice as well as cats are beasts, Matey. But if another mouse runs in the game to interrupt...

- Surely you are not going to play at cat's paw, Cody.

- Decoy, darling, keep our figure on its logical legs. I might play the worsted ball, or drag you in for that, but I was referring to that odious woman, that Madame Duke.

- He won't care for her, said Sylvia scornfully, el-

evating the tip of her pretty nose.

- He won't care for her, but she will get under his feet and she may trip him up and set him blundering. She is capable even of biting his toes.

- I wish we hadn't shipped our passengers. We were very well suited on our ship. Tessie is nice, though not a bit like her mother. I'd like to know what Mr. Duke is like.

- A lamb, darling, take my word for it, a lamb. Fortunately, the Lord tempers the shorn lamb to the wind.

- But Tessie seems to really love her mother. In a sense she is the parent and the other the child.

- And nothing is more odious than a forward super-adolescent brat, especially of the feminine she-gender. But as usual, my little Matey, you err on the side of soft-heartedness. The daughter is not an unworthy progeny of her mother.

- You have seen something?

- I have heard something which is almost as safe. Those two children, I mean she and Beatrice Knox, have actually picked up some beaux in the port and are having larks and tea-parties with two art students. It is shocking. I am scandalized when I speak of it.

- Did Mrs. Swan tell you this?

- You do well, Matey, to look to our chief source of scandal. It is a wonder that she has not nosed this out. But I could feel that the old dear was concerned.

- Did he say what kind of boys the art students were?

- My mentor, all boys are going to be men. At twenty they have already achieved that execrable state of brutishness.

- Do they see the boys often?

- If they have not, depend on it, they will. We mustn't forget our boarding school days, Matey... when we needed a procter as much as any.

- It wouldn't do any good to speak to Mrs. Duke, reflected Sylvia. She'd only say it was natural, and turn to herself.

- In a way I am glad it has happened, declared Captain Cody. It gives a handle to what before was a sphere. In other words we have got to land our passengers. We may take on others for Mrs. Stowe's sake, but we've got to get rid of these. I know of two respectable gentlewomen, too old for imprudences... colorless I admit, but genteel. The Ship's officers can furnish plenty of color. In short, I intend to go to Mrs. Stowe and tell her that these goings on will give her house a bad name. Of course we will keep the Midshipman. It is really the First Class cabin we wish to clean out and fumigate,

- But Mrs. Stowe can't tell Mrs. Duke to go, gasped Sylvia,

- My dear, you forget the Ship's Captain. I will be so politely nasty to Mrs. Juke that she will make a row and say that I must go or she will. Mrs. Stowe will be well primed by me, and First Class Cabin will go back with the pilot.

They were startled, and the conversation was

brought to a close by the sound of a quick step on the gravel walk of the terrace outside. Whoever the rambler was she did not stop, but they heard her cross the arch bridge of the acequia and go on toward the hut of Mrs. Duke.

- I'll swear that woman has been brazening it about the Man's studio, whispered the Captain. Come, Matey, lets on the cross trees, to look for a sail.

- I wonder if she heard us. flurried Sylvia. Cody dear, you talk so loud when you're in earnest.

The wayfarer was not Mrs. Duke but her daughter Tessie, making a circuit of the garden, returning from their post office at the trysting oak, intent on evading the lookout at the window of Letitia Swan.

Approaching the hut, known as the Quarter Deck, she had heard her own name and her mother's spoken and her curiosity blended with her youth had caused her to linger till anger drove her on. Once in her mother's room she poured out the whole story in indignation that succeeded to tears.

- Ben and John are both perfectly nice boys, she sobbed, and that horrid woman's tongue makes us all seem guilty. Oh Mother, I wish we could get away from this place. They call it a ship but I think it is more like a sewing circle. I wish we could find a house of our own, where we could do the cooking and cleaning ourselves and have the boys and Beatrice in every evening.

- I will try to arrange it, consoled Mrs. Duke. Mr.

Morgan was telling me of a little four room cottage down close to the sea, that had but yesterday been vacated by its tenants. I hated to think of leaving Mrs. Stowe after we had engaged our hut so long in advance but if Miss Cody has two ladies to take our place, we will not give her time to make trouble. It will be a triumph, she remarked after some reflection, and her eyes flashed green fire and her lips tightened. It will be a triumph to have Mr. Plummer for dinner. I'll bet you a dollar, Trix, that once we are gone they will vote to have men guests just to spite us.

- I do hope, Mother, if she begins to be disagreeable to you in the morning you will give her as good as she gives you.

- I am not so clever as the novelist, Marion Cody, but I will try to hold my temper and watch my chance. But from you, Trixey, not a word except the sweetest, and if you tell Beatrice, make her promise not to tell the others. We want to have the air of going with great regret, for I have had too many quarrels in my life to seek another.

The two ladies did not meet till lunch, and Mrs. Duke had had a busy morning. No sooner had Captain Cody entered the room with her literary sword half drawn from its sheath, than the little woman ran up to greet her and taking both her unresisting hands, and holding them affectionately, she looked pleadingly and pleasantly into her eyes.

- I must tell you first, Captain, she began, since

you are the first in authority, that I am forced by the state of my health to leave you immediately for my physician has absolutely insisted on daily sea bathing. I had thought when I arranged for the villa that I could easily walk the mile intervening but I find it altogether too exhausting in the sand and heat, and so I have given Mrs. Stowe notice. It has occured to me that you might know some one who could take our hut. It is so perfectly lovely, and I can't tell you how Tessie and I hate to leave you all. We shall feel very dull and lonely in our little cottage, and we look forward to your all coming to see us.

- What! have you found a place so soon? asked the Captain. I am sure we shall not be able to reconcile ourselves to the loss of our passengers.

- Mr. Morgan has been so kind as to find us a cottage, simpered Mrs. Duke with affection. He is a sweet thing, and insists on coming to dine with us, though tonight we are to have dinner with him and Mr. Plummer and Mr. Quinn. You are to come too, Beatrice dear, she beamed at Miss Knox, and after dinner the boys Ben and John are to come for us and help us get installed in the cottage. They will walk home with you when all is done and Tess will, no doubt, like a stroll in the moonlight. With one boy I know she would not object, but I think she can be persuaded even with two.

- Now mother, you know I love them both, pouted Tessie, and Trix loves us all three, don't you, Trixie? But why shouldn't she stay with us all night? She can

send down her night things with the wagon that takes our trunks.

- This is all alarmingly sudden, expostulated the Captain.

- We are heart-broken to leave you, I assure you, but I am afraid we are keeping everybody from lunch.

And so all sat down to the table, and so the battle royal was over.

CHAPTER IV

The Purser

Cecily Blount and Beatrice Knox were lolling through the heat of the afternoon after their morning's work and their lunch, which had been slack of conversation and excitement after the departure of the two passengers. The Midshipman had been the center of interest at that function as she had dined the night before with the men. But the Captain had been too proud to question her, except for the usual polite inquiry as to her pleasant evening, and Beatrice being piqued at the expulsion of her friends had remained mischievously and aggravatingly silent. She had spoken of the women however, the cosy charm and delight of their sea cottage, and she had enlarged on the kindness of the two boys who had so enthusiastically aided in the establishment. Nothing, however, was said of the Man. It was not even mentioned whether he had been present. Miss Blount was the only one who knew that he had been,

and she had not learned it from the reticent Beatrice. Last night she had been more successful in her strategy for she had encountered him alone as he was returning to his studio, and had walked back with him up the hill through the moonlight. She was considering now whether she should make a confidant of the Midshipman. She wanted to talk with some one, she was bursting with the subject and Letitia Swan certainly would not do. She waited till she could more definitely judge the attitude of her hut-mate and gradually led the talk in that direction, deciding to act from the impulse of the moment if a way should open up to ease her heart.

- Do the men seem to like Mrs. Duke? she said once by way of introduction.

- Why shouldn't they? challenged the pert little Beatrice, always ready for the defense of her friends.

- Well the women don't seem to. I was wondering. I liked her extremely, and Tessie, but the rest here seemed to fight a little shy.

- They are so differently brought up, replied Beatrice. Men have had a wider experience and don't mind.

- I suppose these men have a wider experience than most. They have all seen the world... lived in Europe.

- Oh, I don't think American men so narrow. Not but what the three we speak of are charming.

- Did they talk about the Morganatic and its officers?

- No: they were talking art mostly. Mrs. Duke you know, has spend some months in Paris and natu-

rally they were going over old times.

- It is my dream to have a studio in Paris. Ideas and conventions here are so cramped. Does Mr. Plummer expect to remain long in America?

- He thinks he may get some portrait orders in Los Angeles, but I suppose that would keep him only this winter.

- How funny it sounds to have this heat spoken of as winter.

- Yes: it is a word that should never be used here.

- I wonder if he paints portraits for the fun of it. That is I wonder if he would like to have a dancer pose for instance. It might be a very good advertisement for me if I were exhibited. Mr. Plummer has quite a name in the east I fancy.

- Not so great I guess. He pretends not to have. He said he had been turned down by the Academy this year. Not that he seemed to mind in the least.

- How did he treat Mrs. Duke?

- Treat her!.. flamed the loyal little Beatrice.

- I mean, was he attentive? Did he seem to like her? Did she ask him to her cottage? and did he accept?

- Everybody asks everybody in such a case, Beatrice threw off carelessly. And naturally everybody accepts among friends.

- Well, I don't have to ask him to dinner. Miss Blount was beginning to feel resentment and independence. I have my work which occupies my time.

How was it that when she began to speak she intended to tell, and as soon as she made a statement she

decided not to.?

- Of course, he is really in love with Charlotte, smoothed out Beatrice, who had no desire to quarrel. But they are both poor and I think it would be a mistake to marry.

- I think she would take the risk quick enough.

- Oh, we all would if we were in love I suppose. But a man feels the responsibility before he marries.

- Not afterwards,.. our Letitia Swan would say.

- It's natural that the woman should feel it afterwards. Since it is her business to look after the household.

- Oh, fiddle! I don't want any marriage in mine. But I'd like to have a man make love to me, wouldn't you?

- It is always pleasant, of course, replied the blushing Beatrice. Every woman likes to exercise her power.

- Do you think he is crazy about Miss Gaylord?

- He managed to eat a good dinner without her, laughed Beatrice.

- I don't think a man at his age is crazy about any woman. He likes to pluck a flower, twist it in his fingers and throw it aside for another later on.

- I hope the thorns will tear his hand, flared up Beatrice.

- Oh, I don't even hope that. We are not all roses. I would be a poppy and leave him dreaming.

- Miss Gaylord is no poppy I am sure. She is a thistle, no the flower of a black locust. He'll hardly pluck her. He'll only philander beneath in the shade.

- And what kind of a flower am I then? laughed Miss Knox.

- A carnation, my dear, a sweet scented pink. Now I am a cabbage... to be eaten.

The Midshipman went to her own room to take a nap and Cecily Blount drowsed contentedly with her dreams.

- I am really like a poppy, she mused lazily... no, I am really like a cabbage and ripe to pluck. It sounds foolish to talk of a cabbage being ripe. I'll be a peony; that is better, a crimson peony.

When she wakened it was with a sickness of heart, more like that which she was familiar with in the morning. She was making the mistake of being over bold. Why had she told him so frankly last night she had come down on purpose to meet him? She had argued then that he would guess it, even if she pretended another excuse. It was not reasonable that she should walk that road twice without a motive. Then she had often been told that one of her charms was her frankness. Letitia Swan was always telling her that.

But Letitia Swan had been telling her other things as well in the past week, things about men, that did not seem to be quite universal. For one thing, that all men were brutes and would never fail to take advantage of a woman. Now, she, Cecily Blount, had gone down the hill to allow this man to take advantage of her. Mrs. Swan 's description of these masculine brute characteristics had roused her curiosity. They had had the opposite effect from what the poetess had described.

Cecily had all but invited the man to be a brute and he had insisted on being more like a school boy. Not that he had been over modest or bashful... he had indeed been forward in some instances. But he had the good natured resistance of a big brother, when his sister wants a favor done and is petting him. Cecily had a big brother, and several cousins, but this man was not a relative and had no right to assume the ways of one. She hated them; he was a stranger, a heart-breaker, a Don Juan, according to the noisy preachings of Letitia Swan. Now, Beatrice Knox would say it was because he was in love with Charlotte but... fiddle sticks! If Charlotte Gaylord only knew that he had been chucking her, Cecily Blount, under the chin!.. No, such conduct was not remaining faithful to Miss Gaylord.

Cecily rose and stood long before the mirror, assuming all the expressions of coquettishness, enthusiasm, earnestness that she employed the night before without effect, and wondering if it was the fault of the moonlight. If he could see her in candle-light she felt he would be influenced. Artists love strongly contrasted light effects sometimes, and she knew a trick of holding the candle just below and in front of her chin and then looking upward with laughter. It was really like a Franz Hals or Rembrandt. She wished he would paint her that way.

He certainly had a way of putting her off that positively made her want to leap and kiss him. If she should do, it she doubted whether he would be shocked;

but perhaps one kiss might make him careless about others. After all she had heard things about men before Letitia Swan began her instruction. One of them was that a man didn't like a woman to seek him out. But even Captain Cody said that had gone out of fashion. Still it was possible, now Cecily considered it, that this man was an old-fashioned man.

She reviewed all they had said as they walked loiteringly up the hill to his studio and decided that he was not old-fashioned at all. He had met her, well, now she came to analyze it, something as a man might who had been married for six months or so, and she had come out to meet him in a place that was not public, but still that might be overlooked by an intimate friend... Yes, his manner seemed to say. She loved him and he still loved her, and it was a very jolly arrangement altogether, but they must not be too intimate or private, because it was a public road way after all, and well, it's an old story you know, and he wanted to be enjoying the moonlight.

And this would have been all very well until they came to the studio, but then he had grown suddenly formal, put out his hand suavely to say good night, and he even thanked her for coming to meet him. The effrontery, it was effrontery, made her blush still. She decided she would teach him a lesson.

The question was, how was she to do it, since he had not asked the permission to call. Indeed he probably knew of this stupid Morganatic rule that had been instigated and pushed through by Miss Cody. Miss Co-

dy was a horrid person, she saw it now, who liked men and yet was not very attractive to them. So she could not bear to see them attentive to other women, and for that she had shoved Mrs. Duke out. Well, she should not shove out Cecily Blount. But Cecily would get that man just the same. She had long wanted the attentions of a man. Perhaps that was a secret reason why she had decided to be a dancer. Anyway now that her profession had been decided upon she needed a man, many men, to pay her courtesy. This one was handsome, experienced, unattached. He should be her first conquest. She now willed it. She might not rule for long, she did not care, but this conquest would be the first step to another. Letitia Swan had made her eager for experience, with her constant repelling descriptions given in detail. Letitia Swan had had a past and could afford to cavil. But it is hypocritical to cavil at the future.

Letitia Swan was having her own troubles and was relating them to a more sympathetic ear than her dear Cecily's. Charlotte Gaylord was sewing in her room, making a new dinner gown. She could do it. Perhaps she could do it better than she could paint a picture, she had been a poor girl and had learned to do things deftly. Her sense of duty was not dulled by her love of fashion and to design a dinner gown when she could afford the materials was her delight. This time a friend had helped her purchase: purple silk, wine colored velvet, beaded embroideries of gold and green and silver.

- You are certainly a wonder, sighed Letitia. It just suits you, with those beads in your hair. I wish you would design me such a gown.

- Would you really wear a frock of my making? Charlotte radiantly paused before the mirror. The Poetess was wont to appear in black silk, that was somewhat worn as well as carelessly adjusted.

- Sure I'd wear anything, replied Letitia. I haven't had a pretty frock since I was divorced.

- I should make it old-fashioned, short waisted. Some quaint, odd flowered pattern of soft wool.

- It sounds like a piece of goods I have in my trunk now. Mr. Swan bought it for me for a present, he got it at some country store or other and I was so mad at him I never would have it made up. I kept it thinking I might sometime use it for curtains. He called it delaine. That's what his mother used to call it. Did you ever hear of delaine?

Charlotte shook her head and asked the color but she was really thinking of her purple and her crimson, and how they were Joe's favorite colors for her.

- I will go and get it, said Mrs. Letitia. It's down on the very bottom of my trunk.

When she returned, Charlotte had taken off her robes and was once more the sedate seamstress in gray linen.

- Peach stones with green spots in the middle, planted diamond-wise in a field of yellow white... cried Letitia coming in with the delaine.

- Why, it's pretty! We'll, get some cherry colored

ribbon and make you a sash and shir in a round neck. You can wear a locket and put marigolds in your hair. With red shoes you would be like a picture.

- I have an old locket, mused the poetess. It was my mother's. It's all the jewelry I have. But you are laughing at me with my green eyes and gray hair. Cherry colored ribbons and marigolds... Great God!

- I mean it, I will show you, cried Charlotte. Take your blouse off while I rummage for some red stuff.

Letitia laughed with the bashfulness of a plow-boy, but dutifully did as she was bid.

Miss Gaylord stood surveying her for a moment and then took an end of the goods and began to gather it.

- No: first we must do your coiffure. That makes the difference! And taking out Mrs. Letitia's prim hair-pins, she brushed the thin hair down from its former severe position, to make it shade her cheeks and hide her neck, which was sallow and strenous and sinewy. This she bound with a ribbon of black velvet and took some marigolds from a glass on her dresser to twist beneath. She even discovered a strand or two that she could curl, and tucked the frazzled ends under the velvet.

- Now we are ready for the bodice, you shall not look in the mirror till it is done. She then tucked the two ends of the dress pattern in the neck of Mrs. Swan's untrimmed underwaist, tied them high under the arms with a sash of red, draped a moment, patted, pinned and gathered. - There! she exclaimed, pushing her

model before the mirror. The lady of a hundred years ago, colonial-empire!

Mrs. Swan laughed a low melodious note. - You are a witch, she said patting both cheeks of the delighted artist... It is pretty, but, come, I couldn't wear it. Everybody would think me a fool with my forty years and my gray hair.

- A woman is no older than she looks, laughed Miss Gaylord, and your hair is not gray it's ashen green. It just misses the fashionable shade of two years back, but the antiqueness of the fashion heightens the picture.

- A locket would be pretty, laughed Letitia, but mine is as big as a watch, bigger than many. It's one of those for a picture and lock of hair. It is plain gold with a wreath of roses engraved on the face.

- Just the thing. You shall wear it at Mrs. Duke's party. She said she was going to ask you and Beatrice Knox.

- I go to a party at Mrs. Duke's?

- Why not? There'll be only Mr. Morgan and Mr. Quinn and Mr. Plummer, I believe. Oh, yes, two young art students, friends of the girls. The cottage is small but the porch is spacious and there is a garden, that gives down on the level beach; it's really lovely.

- But I am not a friend of Mrs. Duke.

- You're not an enemy, are you? You're an acquaintance, the same as I am. At a party one talks mostly with the men.

- I can talk with Mr. Morgan and Mr. Quinn.

- Of course, and Mr. Plummer is not so horrid.

- Taking a bath. Ugh!

- He probably won't take one at the party. If there is bathing that is different from a bath.

- I don't see how that woman can stand up before him. I think I'll go just to see how she carries it off.

The party was set for an evening three days hence. When the invitation came to Mrs. Swan, it was accepted. She was already deep in the wonders of the frock.

Miss Gaylord was disappointed in the party as much as her new protégée was delighted. Letitia had been acclaimed a success by all except the one she most desired. Mr. Plummer had rebuked Charlotte late in the evening, sworn at "the scrawny little shrew with the man's voice", declared her pretended poetry to be drivel, and in short he had been ungentlemanly and rude. Besides poor Charlotte was not arrayed in her purple and wine color, having given so much time to help Letitia who was actually only a hindrance at sewing and the regal gown had been laid aside. In her bitterness Charlotte had put on an old brown silk. She knew that Joe hated her in brown. Then he had talked all the time about Miss Blount. - Was she wealthy? Did she have lovers? Who would help her in a career, or how did she expect to get on?

- She seems to have made an impression on you that night. You should have asked Mrs. Duke to invite her to this party.

- Anything would have been better than that rasp-

ing donkey-engine of a poet, had snarled Joe Plummer. She has been following me around till I feel like a load of pumpkins. I believe donkey-engines are fed on pumpkins.

Miss Gaylord had informed her ex-sweetheart his wit was forced and had turned all her smiles to Mr. Quinn. Whereupon both to her horror and her satisfaction, Letitia Swan had actually taken Joe by the sleeve and in Charlotte's hearing he had asked her if she admired Cecily Blount, and Letitia had rode forth on her favorite subject and succeeded in finishing up the evening with that theme.

Then on their arrival home, Letitia had become suddenly suspicious when Beatrice had found Cecily's hut vacant. Even apart from suspicions she would have to have a long talk with Charlotte, for her excitement would remain with her for the night.

- It's strange where that girl is, she began cautiously, for she knew that if Charlotte suspected any meeting with Mr. Plummer it would cause her uneasiness if not pain, and the poetess was genuinely kind hearted.

- Probably she's gone down the terrace road to meet Mr. Plummer, said Miss Gaylord laying aside her hated gown and slipping on a kimono of shimmering lilac.

- Well, since you suspect it too, I am glad you speak of it. For I wouldn't hurt your feelings for the world.

- Why should what Miss Blount does hurt my feelings? Mr. Plummer walks with a hundred girls, I sup-

pose.

- Don't... don't you have an understanding? asked the Chief Steward leaning eagerly forward.

- I don't think we have any misunderstanding; that's a better condition than the one you mention, isn't it?

- I had thought you did, said Letitia somewhat sadly. You ought to bring him to it. You really ought to.

- An understanding that he should not walk with Miss Blount when she is so thoughtful as to come down to accompany him up the hill?

- Did he tell you she did?... very fervidly.

- Why, wasn't I with him at the time?... Miss Gaylord was petulant.

- That time, yes. But she may have gone again.

- One usually repeats what one has done if one has found it pleasant.

- I wish we had got out of the car and walked up with him.

- You take more interest in his private affairs than I do.

- Oh, I was thinking of Cecily. But I do think he's every inch a gentleman.

- Then he will conduct himself in a gentlemanly manner, no doubt.

- My dear, you don't know men. You really don't. Not till you've been married to one do you know them.

- I suppose they aren't all alike any more than women are alike. I don't think I'm like Cecily Blount.

If a man came to meet me intentionally and persisted I would slap his face for him, said Miss Gaylord, in a tone that seemed to be slapping at Miss Blount.

- Men don't slap women till they are wearied of them. And then they mayn't do that, though they're brutes.

- If they're brutes I should think you'd advise me to keep away from an understanding. Charlotte returned to the subject, against her pride, at the same time hating herself for doing so.

- It's hard for a woman to live alone, said Mrs. Swan.

- It's hard to live with a man, I am told.

- Did you ever try living with a woman?

- I always have, but it comes to grief. I begin to think nothing endures.

- I wish you and I could live together. I can't tell you how much comfort you are to me.

- Oh, I'd get into a tantrum the first week. I'm horrid when I get in a tantrum.

- I would understand, said Mrs. Swan. I've been in tantrums myself.

- There you are. We'd both get in one together.

- Separate ones?... or the same one? laughed Letitia. Puzzle: can two people get in one tantrum?

The interview lagged. Miss Gaylord yawned.

- Let's walk out in the garden, suggested Mrs. Swan. She did not dare suggest they should spy on Cecily's return, though she thought that Miss Gaylord might think of it.

- Too tired: I think I'll go to bed.

- That's an invitation for me to go I suppose, bristled the poetess. I am capable of taking a hint, you needn't order me out. To the other's great surprise she burst out sobbing. She seemed a middle-aged woman in a child's dress.

Miss Gaylord went over and put her arm around her shoulder.

-There! I didn't mean anything, she soothed comfortingly.

But the woman's grief only fed on her compassion.

- I am lonely, and deserted, and old, she gasped between sobs. Her shoulders heaved as with the pent anguish of a man.

- You are none of those, dear Mrs. Swan.

- Don't call me by that name! I hate it. If you loved me you'd call me Letitia.

- Why, I've only known you for these few weeks. I didn't mean any coldness. Don't cry so.

- I believe you are jealous of Cecily; I really have tried to make you jealous but all the time I have liked you the best.

- You shall like her as much as you please. I'm not jealous. A woman can be fond of all her friends, can't she?

- You don't know what friendship is, said Mrs. Swan. I believe you're thinking of that man even now.

- You are getting too personal, Mrs. Swan.

For reply the Chief Steward threw herself on the bed and bit the coverlet in a paroxism of weeping.

Charlotte was both incensed and distressed. She remembered that she, herself, had gone through such crises with her friends, and now she was humiliated as she recalled it.

- Really, Letitia... she began sorrowfully -

- Call me Lettie, if you don't despise me. I hate Letitia. Nobody calls me Lettie in this house.

- I couldn't call you Lettie, any more than I could allow you to call me Lottie, she said smiling. It would be ludicrous for us both, don't you think?

Her humility from past weaknesses made her tolerant. She determined to be kind to the little woman.

- Don't cry so. Don't cry, she kept saying.

- You took so much trouble to prink me up for the party; you neglected your own dress to do it. I appreciated it, though I act as if I didn't and I tried to like the Man for your sake, and I am sure he likes me.

- What does it matter? soothed Charlotte in alarm.

- He must at least have thought me clever. I was almost brilliant. I really have never talked so well before.

Suddenly she sat bolt upright on the bed, and stared straight before her, thinking deeply.

- He was pumping me about Cecily, she said stonily. And I'll bet he's had an appointment to meet her. I don't care if you do think it's beneath my pride. I'm going to find out; I'm going now.

She stalked out of the room in mannish fashion, quite out of keeping with her pretty little frock.

Miss Blount seemed not to be in her room, and after tapping, the Chief Steward made bold to enter.

- Is that you Cecily? called out the startled Midshipman through the next door.

- Good Lord! are you awake Beatrice? It's after midnight. I thought everybody should be asleep.

- You don't seem to be, unless you are a somnambulist, returned the Midshipman with some show of spirit.

- I can't sleep. A party all upsets me. Where is Miss Blount? Tell me that.

- I suppose she's out somewhere for a walk. She loves to stroll about in the moonlight.

- Alone!

- Who is there to stroll with on our decks? I have never heard of her being seen ashore.

- You know I begin to think this ship's rule business is all nonsense. It's not rational to forbid entertaining the men.

- I think it's cosy. If we want men there are always plenty of them hovering around.

- Like sharks, you mean. Mrs. Swan was sarcastic.

- Sharks and larks rhyme, said the sleepy Midshipman.

The Chief Steward came in and sat down on the edge of the bed.

- Do you realize, she began solemnly, that all this time Charlotte is eating her heart out for love of that Man in the garden. Do you realize that they have been as good as engaged for three years and now Cecily

Blount is squeezing in between them.

- I suppose Mr. Plummer knows his own mind, replied Beatrice, waking up, however, at the hint of a romance.

- A man will let himself be wound around any woman's finger, if only she will take the trouble to do it.

- And do you think Cecily is really out with him?

- Where else could she be at this ungodly hour? And don't you see that this rule gives her all the advantage over Charlotte, who has too much respect for herself to go hanging around a man's studio, or intercepting him on his walks home.

- Why don't you speak to the Captain about changing the rules?

- Oh, damn your "Captain"! Who is she to be Captain? Aren't we living in a democracy in America!

But the Midshipman was beginning to drowse softly, and the Chief Steward went away in disgust.

She paced restlessly back and forth along the terrace in front of the hut for ten minutes, stopping frequently to listen to catch the sound of footsteps. At length she could endure the strain no longer and stole down the path of steps to the second terrace.. There she saw a white figure in the shadow of an olive tree, and boldly advanced to accost it with some asperity. It turned out to be Marion Cody, however, much too tall and slender for the plump figure of the dancer.

- I was looking for Miss Blount, she said calmly, after the Captain had hailed her with, "Ship ahoy!"

- It seems we are all sleepless tonight, laughed the

Captain. I think it is the brilliancy of the moon. Miss Howard though seems undisturbed by its radiance. For my part, I have no desire to turn in. Was Miss Blount a member of the party aboard the Yacht? How pretty you are in that darling little dress!

- It's all mussed now; stammered the poetess, much pleased.

- Miss Gaylord was telling me about it. She ought to turn modiste. She's really an artist. No doubt she's just as clever at her pictures.

- Captain, I'm all for changing this rule about the men... began the Chief Steward bluntly. It isn't right that some others should have the advantage of inviting them, and still others dogging their foot-steps on the roads, or traipesing about with them in the fields. Now there's Charlotte, she's an old friend of Mr. Plummer, and, naturally, would like to ask him to her table... Then, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Quinn are always entertaining us, and we have no way of responding to their attentions unless we ask them up to tea, at least It's not that I want the men, or that you do, but it isn't fair to those who do, and I'm for freedom.

- In other words, responded the Captain somewhat thoughtfully, if we have prohibition, the temperate are made to suffer total abstinence, and the intemperate take advantage through evasion.

- That's where you hit the nail on the head! pronounced the Chief Steward; and the Captain replied they would have to think it over.

As there seemed no further topic for conversation

between them, the Chief Steward passed on with a brief Good-night. Not invited to pace the second terrace with Miss Cody, and not willing to go back to the first, she boldly took the path to the lower, leaving the Captain to such surmises as she might choose.

- Cecily! she called, guardedly, once or twice; but no Cecily... and she walked on, in front of the studio. The gates were closed, and well screened with vines... No sign of a light glimmered through. If the Man had come straight home from the entrance of the lane where he left them, he might, long ago, have been in his bed. If he had encountered Miss Blount, and tarried, they must have turned off on some by-path. The Chief Steward went down the road all the way to the drive where they had left him...

How lonely the dusty drive-way seemed in the moonlight! It shone like the sands of a desert. And the rustling of the eucalyptus leaves as she entered the grove had a sinister warning against remembrance.

It was half past two when the Chief Steward, with dress bedraggled, slipped into her own room in the villa. All lights were out; the house was everywhere silent. She kindled her own lamp and carried it to the mirror. She was horrified to find how old she looked; and her face was gray with dust and streaked with tears. Without undressing, without removing her shoes, she crawled on her bed, pulled a coverlet over her, and lay thinking of the past. It was dawn before she roused enough to creep between the sheets for comfort. The birds singing did not prevent her from falling asleep.

. . . . . .

- We may admit, to each other, Matey, in private, that we have been a bit school- girlish in our enthusiasm. Captain Cody lighted her third cigarette and stretched herself on the bench for its enjoyment.

- Heaven preserve for us our school-girl enthusiasm, replied Sylvia. When it is gone there is naught but to cast ourselves into the sea.

- Ugh! Don't speak of drowning. I hate it. That's the reason that I so thoroughly enjoy this ship. The ship enthusiasm now is always an enjoyable one, but we have made a mistake in the ship's articles, in landlubber parlance: the rules.

- Some of the officers seem to rather scorn the ship.

- My dear, what people protest against, they secretly love. But the rule against men is annoying. I am glad that the Chief Steward brought it up for reconsideration.

- It is better than coming from us.

- Wild horses should never have dragged it from me. No, not though I was pining for the sight of a man.

- If you and I vote for it, it will carry unanimous, with the Chief Steward and the Chief Engineer both won over.

- I'm not so sure about the Chief Engineer. Charlotte Gaylord is one of those not unusual types of women who always vote against what they desire.

- She is in a difficult position, Cody. She is really.

- My darling, all women are in a difficult position when it comes to the question of securing a partner. For a man, to desire a mate is accredited honorable. For a woman, it is despicably vulgar.

- Well, the women get even after marriage.

- Do they? Do they? The Captain began to fume.

- If a wife wants a divorce she is pitied, sustained. If a husband, he is branded unfaithful.

- You renegade! You traitress of your sex!

- After all, I don't see that the conventions of courtship are so unfair to the woman. It is woman's nature to crave attention, and she creates a situation where she can get it. She forces the man into the position of agressor, and if she sometimes finds one will not agress, it is but justice that she should suffer for his inertia.

- You have been listening to the Misogynist. You traitor!

- The Misogynist is a curious creature. Can you imagine his being in love?

- Now Sylvia, we have discussed all that before. You know that is the reason I hate the Misogynist, because I am like him.

- You will fall for a man some day, old Cody.

- Never! While I keep my wits to steel my heart. I have seen too many women in love, Matey. They are all blank fools then, ridiculous. Besides, it isn't my nature to adore a man.

- But you like them to adore you, you know, Cody.

- That is explained by the general love of power.

An attribute shared alike by both sexes.

- I don't believe the Misogynist loves power. I am sure a woman's love would embarass him, and even a man's would annoy him.

- The Misogynist gets his feast of power by being remote to others; he over-lives them.

- That is not power, it is aloofness.

- In the end it brings power more than anything. You will find that if any of us get into trouble, it is to the Misogynist that we go for aid and consolation.

- There is something about him that makes you feel like giving him confidence. He is a sort of father confessor.

- And what power is there like the power of the priest?

- But you often say, Cody, that no one comes to you with a confidence... so after all, you can't be like the Misogynist.

- You are a clever little minx, Sylvia, to upset my private philosophy of vain glory. So that is the reason I hate him?

- I meant to say you were different; and that one day you will fall for a man.

The Captain came and knelt at her friend's knees, her voice was richer and more husky than usual.

- Speed the day, Matey, speed the day! I admit that I am a lonely, morbid woman,

. . . . . .

The Captain tapped her glass after the dessert had been served, and the two maids had retired to the kitchen.

- Since we are to take on two passengers tomorrow, it may be well if we over-haul our regulations. The Chief Steward has an amendment to propose. I will now call on the Chief Steward. Gentlemen, attention.

Letitia Swan became suddenly bashful and squirmed in her chair like a boy.

- You propose it, Captain. I can't make a speech. When I open my mouth I always put my foot in it.

- As a fine for getting off so old a joke, I require the Chief Steward to proceed.

- Well, the poetess began, getting up from her chair. I over-hauled the Captain, last night, on the quarter deck, I think that is the sea-worthy phrase, and I put up a mutiny from the officers and told her we were for retracing our course on the bylaws. I said: With so many fish in the water - sharks was the word I used with the Captain - with so many sharks in the water, we were at a disadvantage from the inhabitants of the smaller craft. In fact, I am not sure I make myself clear. I propose we strike out the bylaw against entertaining men on board the Morganatic. I wish to record my vote for men. I hope my motives will not be misunderstood.

- It is out of order for you to vote first, interrupted the Purser. We maintain the prestige of rank. I, as the Purser, will keep the record, and I call first for a speech and vote from Captain Cody.

The Captain, now rose smilingly at the summons

and the Chief Steward sank back and mopped her brow.

- Hear, hear, Captain Cody! she cried.

- Gentlemen, began the Captain, very graciously.. It is not so much on account of the sharks that I am changing my mind, as on account of the dignity with which I now regard our position. I take it that none of us have remodeled our convictions about men. We all scorn them as we always have, and always will, but by showing our scorn, I think we may seem to give to the inferior sex an importance that in reality does not obtain. It is not that any one of us personally desires to invite a man on board the Morganatic. It is probable that no man will ever be invited. But we wish to stand well in the supremacy of our own estimation. Therefore, I vote for the amendment.

- The Mate, called out the Purser after a round of applause.

- Fellow ship-mates, began Sylvia, slightly flushing. For my own part, I cannot attain the high standpoint of my superior officer. I admit frankly that I am out for sharks, and my harpoon is newly baited with ten pounds of blubber. I announce the Misogynist as my quarry. I wish to land him headlond and gasping on our decks. I vote yes for the amendment.

- Two votes "for", called out the Purser. A speech now and a vote from the Engineer.

Miss Gaylord rose, this time in no way flustered, a hidden smile seemed playing beneath her lips.

- I am deeply pained, I am grieved at the confessions of my superiors, in this reactionary measure, and

I think the Mate is employing the wrong method for catching sharks.

The best way, gentlemen, to catch a shark, is not to dangle a baited hook over the side... It is to boldly hurl one's self into the briny deep and the sharks, if of the proper species, will bite instantly. I remain faithful in voting "no" to the amendment.

- Two "for", one "against", called the Purser. Now we will hear from the Chief Steward.

- I made my speech - Mrs. Swan looked reproachfully at Charlotte Gaylord - and in spite of the Chief Engineer's objections, I vote "for".

- Three for the amendment and one against. We now take the vote of the Ship's Doctor.

- In order to keep up the interest of the contest, since the question at stake has no interest for me, laughed the Doctor, I change my vote from the first time like my Captain and request that now it be recorded "no" to the amendment.

- Three "for" and two "against", read the Purser. We now have to hear from the Midshipman.

Miss Beatrice Knox was feeling mischievous that morning and thought it would be a lark to throw the responsability of the contest on the dancer.

- No speech, she answered demurely, but I set my vote "no" to the amendment.

Three "for" and three "against", the Purser rose. On me rests the responsability of the deciding vote.

A flutter of excitement ran round the table. Captain Cody was smiling blandly, even graciously, but

there was a glitter in her eye that she could not repress.

- The Purser for a speech and vote... Attention, gentlemen.

Cecily Blount was more charming than she had ever been before. She spoke with a personal inflection that was intimate, even affectionate.

- I am sorry, gentlemen, that I can not maintain the philosophic position that you all assume. I can only be selfish and think of my own needs. As you know I voted for the bylaw in the beginning because I did not want my practice to be interrupted. Now this privacy becomes still more important to me, because I find I am obliged to put my practice in the afternoon. I have made this change out of deference to Mr. Plummer, who only arranges for sitters in the morning. I think I have not told you yet, in fact it was only last night that I gave him my decision... he has been pleased to ask me to pose for him in my Persian Dancer costume... he wants to get a full length for exhibition.

Of course it means professional advantage to me and therefore I vote "no" to the amendment.

- The Amendment is lost. Men are still forbidden the Morganatic, announced the Captain; and breaking up the session thus informally she went over and took Cecily Blount by both hands and congratulated her warmly on her victory.

CHAPTER V

The Midshipman

Beatrice and Tessie were lying in the sand watching the tide creep into the hollows. Their bathing suits were dry from their last dip but conversation had proved too interesting to them to return to the cottage.

- Do you mean to tell me, Tessie, the Midshipman was saying, that you and Ben are actually engaged?

- Well, we thought we would get engaged for two weeks. After that we might know our minds better. Let me see, that was Sunday - Tessie was counting up - and today is Tuesday. We still have eleven more days. It is, dear Trix, to be engaged, positively, darling. Have you ever been in that blessed condition?

- Twice, but it was long ago. I was a mere child.

- Twice to the same man, or separate ones?

- Oh, separate ones! They were years and years apart. I was always very faithful to my engagements.

- You talk like an octogenarian, laughed Tessie,

and now you are only twenty four.

- Twenty four and a half, corrected Beatrice. But why did you get engaged for two weeks? I was engaged for ever and ever.

- It would be nice, I admit, replied Tessie, but you know Ben has his faults and I must be cautious.

- I think he is a very nice fellow.

- You didn't know he drinks. I shouldn't have told you. It is a secret, I only told Mother.

- Why he doesn't look like a drinker.

- I shouldn't say he was exactly a drinker. But he has confessed to taking a glass occasionally. I have made him stop smoking cigarettes, too. So you see our engagement has been good for something.

- But yout mother smokes, I have even seen you puff at a cigarette.

- Mother has formed her habits and probably will not let them grow on her. But Ben is only nineteen and at that age it is better to be prudent.

- If you are so cautious about the habits of your future husband, I should think you would choose an old man.

- When I marry I probaby shall, said Tess calmly. I have warning from the example of my parents, who ran away and married at twenty. Mother was only eighteen.

- They seem to me very happy.

- To you, deary, who remain on the outside. But a daughter knows different. They fight like cats.

- Oh, Tessie!

- Of course, all married people fight. I would rather it would be like cats than like snakes. But I mean to train my husband so he will obey me. Naturally I shall not love him if he does not rebel occasionally.

- For worldly wisdom, Tess, you surely take the prize.

- Yes: I have had the benefits that come from observation, and considering that this is my first *bona fide* engagement I think I have proved that I have profited thereby.

- But if you are going to marry an old man in the end, why not get engaged to one in the beginning?

- Proximity and occasion, my dear, and then you must admit Ben is enthusiastic.

- Well, I am not going to get engaged to John, I couldn't give up the pleasure of hearing him ask me.

- But surely you let him kiss you sometimes.

- Only in the dark. I shouldn't dream of it by daylight.

- It is pleasant, though, by daylight and before people. It makes you feel proud of owning somebody.

- I like more to feel proud of my independence. Now I am thinking of setting my cap for Mr. Plummer.

- Why, you told me that he was reserved for Charlotte Gaylord. Really Beatrice, I think you have hardly dealt fairly with me in this.

- Now really, Tess, it is you who are not fair. You told me yourself that you scorned Mr. Plummer, because you thought it indelicate for both a mother and a daughter to carry on flirtations with the same man.

- That was only for flirtations. Mother, of course, can't marry him. She doesn't believe in divorce.

- Well, I am not going to marry him either. I only meant setting my cap for a flirtation. What I really want is to get in between him and Cecily, break it up, and then turn him over to poor Charlotte.

- That's a dangerous game, Trixie; it really is, and frankly I don't think it's fair to John. It would make him beastly unhappy.

- Do you really love Ben very much? Beatrice was inclined to change the subject.

- Why, I couldn't be engaged to him if I didn't. You surely don't think me capable of hypocrisy?

- What do you talk about, your prospects?

- His prospects, of course, a wife's prospects are her husband's. He is going to keep up his art studies for two years. We both agree that we don't approve of these half-baked artists.

- John is doing commercial work already.

- You must remember that John is twenty three, and he has been in love twice before.

- But not engaged, averred Beatrice.

- Well, there is Mother calling us to lunch. I promised to get it and I haven't. However, husbands and sweethearts are more important. And remember, I warn you, Trixie, solemn... You had better keep away from Mr. Plummer. He's dangerous. You'd better stick to John.

. . . . . .

The Midshipman had her own will, however, she could not endure it to see Charlotte moping, and Cecily being much off of her hands now, she naturally gave more time to the Chief Engineer.

- Why don't you take to riding? she asked one day. It's wicked to stay so much in the house. In the garden you're always meeting the passengers... for Mrs. Duke's former hut was now occupied by two elderly spinsters, very respectable, Miss Clark and Miss Reamer, they were called, and their only occupation was to sit about in the garden and gush about the climate and the view.

- I haven't been on a horse for years, objected Charlotte. Not since I was a little girl on the farm.

- It's the easiest thing in the world, argued Beatrice. The pony Tom is as gentle as a kitten. If you ride astride you don't have to learn. You just sit in the saddle and that's all.

Now it was the Midshipman's idea that if Charlotte would ride she would naturally fall in with Mr. Plummer. He was out for a gallop every day, either alone, or with some of their party. Both Miss Cody and Miss Howard were fine horsewomen. The former had a most masterful ease and grace when astride a horse and Sylvia was very dainty on a side saddle and almost as daring as the Midshipman herself.

In time Charlotte Gaylord was persuaded, though she insisted on a side saddle as more lady like.

- All the better if she falls, perhaps, thought Beatrice. Mr. Plummer will save her in his arms, there

will be an explanation and then a wedding. He is really just the husband for Charlotte.

She helped her make a habit, that would be suitable. They decided on black as most becoming. Miss Gaylord had a spirited carriage and showed courage and perseverance when mounted. Beatrice made her a velvet cap with a white feather and insisted on broad white cuffs and a deep collar. Miss Gaylord's complexion was dark but of the quality of pansies and her oval face was illumined by large dark eyes, that could flash with fire and fun when they were excited, though usually were inclined to be mournful.

- That's right, you're doing nobly! The Midshipman would praise her, herself careless of her capering pony. Beatrice wore a blue habit, rode sidewise and loved nothing more than a mad reckless gallop.

The valley was teeming with lovely roads; there was the mountain drive that skirted the bay, but back some three miles in the hills, there was the sea beach, as level and firm as turf, there were the connecting roads that were more inclined to be dusty. But the best road, according to the taste of the Midshipman, was a long winding canyon filled with sycamores, with a rocky stream bubbling down sinuously to be forded and reforded by plashing hoofs. It was this road that was a favorite with Mr. Plummer and here Beatrice had laid the plan for her romance. They would meet the artist sometime, she would lose them with a furious gallop, where Charlotte would not dare to follow. Mr. Plummer would, of course, remain behind, and then

Providence and natural feelings would do the rest. She had pictured it all out in her enthusiasm. The white mottled trunks of the gnarled sycamores for a decoration, through which Charlotte's black habit and white plume would show effectively. The pony, Tom, was also white and quite in harmony; the mountain stream would make him shy a little sometimes. Her own pony, a strawberry from Montana, would go anywhere full speed through fire and water. Mr. Plummer, quite sedate on his chesnut gelding, would be ideal as protector, guide and friend. Miss Knox had hardly succeeded in imagining him as a lover, but she trusted he could play the part if moved. Sometimes she herself had given him a coquettish glance to try him and she was pleased to see that he was not slow or loth to respond. With the stage thus set, and the performers trained, Beatrice Knox spent her evenings with the art students not divulging the secret plans that her heart harbored, though teased by all the youngsters for her thoughts.

With the Purser, Cecily Blount, who shared her hut, she learned to be wary and wise. Cecily herself was not communicative these days, and, since her posing for her portrait occupied the mornings, and the afternoons usually gave way to parties and excursions, the practice of the dances was discontinued, and the pianist consequently set at liberty. Indeed, music and dancing and novel-writing and poetizing were gradually deteriorating and falling into neglect on board this good ship, the Morganatic. Tessie Duke had been wicked enough to say that the ship had hove to and

cast anchor in order that all the crew might devote their time to fishing for the Man who was overboard; and the Midshipman was inclined to admit Tessie was right. She did not hint this to her mess-mates, however, for she was interested in her own nets and lines. She told herself that she, at least, was working from an altruistic motive and she saw herself succesfully landing her catch and then handing him with a flourish to his rightful owner. She had come to love Charlotte more than all the other officers unless it was the zephyr-like wistful Sylvia, who was pretty much monopolized by Captain Cody. Just now it was the Purser who claimed secondary attention from Beatrice, and a friendship with Sylvia could wait. Cecily was plainly in the best position to fish. Just what she had already hooked, if anything, was a mystery that Beatrice felt impelled to solve.

- It must be hard work, posing, she said comfortingly one afternoon when Cecily had been complaining of fatigue. Couldn't Mr. Plummer have given you a more restful position?

- The pose is significant and I love it, replied Cecily. Of course, it is hard to maintain, but Mr. Plummer lets me rest every ten minutes. He says I stand like a statue. I tell him I do not wish to stand like a statue, I wish to be a woman full of passion. I want him to paint motion, not rest; the music of motion is my idea.

- And what does he say to that?

- Oh, he laughs at me as if I were a child and says

I do not understand painting. He says the problem is entirely of accuracy and if he can reproduce me standing I will seem to move.

- Does he paint while you are resting or only when you pose? asked Beatrice who was more interested in what the two were doing than in any theories of painting or of art.

- Sometimes, he puts in the background or lays the under tones of the figure. It is so interesting to see a painter at work. He charges up and down like one in a frenzy. His head is thrown back, his eyes on fire, his whole face, his whole figure aglow like one inspired.

- Does he wear one of those smocks like artists getting photographed at their easels?

- He has one but I have never seen him wear it; I suppose it would be uncomfortable in hot weather. For my part, I am glad that he doesn't. I get the poise of his figure much better. I am thinking of working up a dance that will represent an artist painting a portrait.

- I suppose women portrait painters don't charge up and down, mused the Midshipman. Charging up and down is only characteristic of the male.

- I would wear a man's costume, of course. I could only think of it as a male impersonation.

- A woman's legs are too short, said Beatrice discouragingly, really meaning that her friend had short legs.

- Yes, that is the most difficult thing to overcome. Girls on the stage always look absurd in man's costume

when they attempt to stride.

- If it were Captain Cody, now, I think she would get an effect of striding.

- She gets that from a trick of the skirts. Haven't you noticed how she short-steps in riding breeches?

- But once on a horse she looks quite commanding.

-Well, my dear, I can't do my dance on a horse, any more than my character could paint on horseback.

- I really believe Mr. Plummer could do that. He is as free as a centaur on horseback.

Now, it must be admitted that the Midshipman was a trifle malicious in turning the conversation from painting into riding. Cecily Blount had never acquired the art of riding. She was, in fact, mortally afraid of a horse, and rendered dizzy by being lifted from the ground.

- Do you read sometimes when you are resting? she inquired fearing that Cecily would drop the subject altogether.

- No, no, we are too much interested for reading. Sometimes, he shows me photographs of nudes. It's wonderful the collections of photographs that artists are permitted to purchase. Nothing of the kind is ever seen on the market. Though, as a dancer, I might be permitted to buy them, I should think.

- Maybe they are photographed privately and not intended for sale.

- No, they are professionally done for artists. The Italian ones of men are especially beautiful. The French go in more for women's figures.

- But isn't it a little embarassing to be looking at such photographs with a man?

- Why, surely you have walked with a man in a public museum!

- Yes... but alone in his studio, and you say these photographs are more... more...

- More intimate you mean. Yes, that is true. But nobody would be embarassed with Mr. Plummer. Why you wouldn't mind posing so yourself for him. He is interested in the figure as a study.

- Well, I think he is interested sometimes as a man. I don't believe he would consider Miss Gaylord as a study.

This was a fling that Cecily had to parry; even at the risk of a little indiscretion.

- I don t think he is interested in Charlotte Gaylord more than in any woman. It is she who gives that impression with her moping silence.

- You must remember they have been friends for several years.

- Well, my goodness, hasn't he been friends with lots of women for several years? If we were to judge from her hints and languishing glances, we would think he had never met another woman besides her in all his life, before he hove into the waters of this ship.

- I sometimes think we all of us here look on him as if he had been specially created for our amusement. I suppose he has had experiences before.

- Experiences! scorned Cecily. I should say so! A man doesn't live in Paris without experiences. Esp-

ecially if he is handsome and an artist. And I doubt not he was no chicken when he went abroad.

- It is different for a man from what it is for a woman, admitted Beatrice.

- Some women; I do not intend it shall be different for me.

- What? Surely you wouldn't... Beatrice hesitated breathless.

- Why shouldn't I, pray tell me? Cecily became dramatic. Of course, I should, and will, again and again. Oh, I am not going to be one of those women like Marion Cody and Letitia Swan who go about spouting theories about their independence and equality. I am going to be independent and equal and not talk about it. The men are that way and I respect them for it.

- I suppose Letitia and even Captain Cody would have the men to be like the women, and not the women to become like the men.

- They say they would, yes, said Cecily scornfully, but notice with what contempt they speak of a boy or a milksop and how they run after a man who has seen the world. Why they are both after Mr. Plummer this minute. That's why I like you. You make friends with John.

- John is as manly as Mr. Plummer, defended Beatrice stoutly.

- I don't say he isn't manly He may be. But I think he wouldn't claim all the experiences of a man of thirty four.

- Miss Gaylord says Mr. Plummer is thirty five.

- Well, he'll be thirty five more, before he falls for her prudishness.

In such heat the conversation came to a close.

. . . . . .

The Midshipman wandered down to the lower terrace, stopping to play with the stones in the rivulet of the acequia. She took care to keep out of sight of the artist's studio, being sheltered by the curvature of the hill. The terrace had the form of a semi-circle and Mr. Plummer dwelt on the extreme northern end. The Midshipman's hut was situated on the southern segment but the terrace walks were much longer below the hill. So the third one was a favorite walk with her, looking directly off as it did on grassy meadows, dotted here and there with old live oaks that had something of the character of apple trees in the distance and seemed domestic as well as antique and romantic. She strolled along the terrace... for some distance, and was just about to approach that part of the curve that would bring the artist's studio wall into view, when she turned and was about to retrace her steps, but lingered looking dreamily toward the ocean, here in vista framed with sloping hills of green.

Then she heard her name called from below.

- Beatrice! Beatrice! Come down here!

- Why, it's Mrs. Swan at her table! She has been asking me to come and see it. I'll go now.

Letitia, true to her plan, had got the gardener to

build her a table where she could write. It was under a live-oak that overspread a great boulder, a block of granite as big as the Midshipman's hut that made a sheltering wall from the wind. The table was built solidly of rough planks and had a drawer-like cupboard on one side underneath to keep the manuscripts and blotters sheltered from the weather. It also had a bench seat with a back, but long enough to lie down on if the poetess should be fatigued. She had carried down two blue silk-covered cushions; she had a dove-blue blotter on the table, a silver inkstand and pens were arrayed, and a sheet of paper fastened down to the blotter with thumb tacks in case a passing breeze should attempt to lift it.

- You surely have everything convenient, admired the Midshipman. You ought to do some beautiful poems here. And just the perfect glimpse of the sea too, and the upper world shut out by the tree and boulder.

- I like blue about me when I write, remarked Mrs. Letitia fondly. It clarifies my thoughts and bears them outward. Have you ever studied the effects of different colors? I have planned to write a whole book about it.

- I have thought of colors only as being becoming to my complexion, laughed the Midshipman. But I soon get stranded for I can only find one... blue. Red makes me green. Yellow makes me purple. Green makes me liver-colored... and pink makes me a fool!

- I think only of the effect on my thoughts, smiled

Letitia. Yellow makes me think of myself. Red makes me think of others. Green makes me think of death... and blue carries me into the abstract and the intellectual.

- You could rig up a kind of wheel like roulette and turn on any spigot of thought you needed.

- I have it in my blotters, said Mrs. Swan - and she drew a variety of them from her cupboard - Here's a brown one. I use that when I want to think of the earth, of the autumn, the garnering season, thrift, and things practical.

- My purse serves me for that, replied the Midshipman. But here is a white one. What is that?

- I keep it for such times as I am tired of all the colors. Sometimes the colors get such a power and a fascination over me that I am overwhelmed and can't think at all.

- But black! I never before saw a black blotter.

- Yes: I had to have that dyed to order. I use it for grief, but it dulls me. I have never succeeded in writing anything on black. Perhaps it is the white paper that distracts me. But I keep it to gaze at sometimes. Gazing intently at black is often restful.

- I wish you'd read me something that you've written down here. I'm sure it must be permeated with this pastoral peace of landscape.

- Pastoral peace of landscape is good. I'll jot it down. I might use it in a poem.

- Read something, urged the Midshipman, when the jotting was finished, and stowed away in a card

index that stood ready.

- I haven't written anything here, sighed the poetess. You know I have only had this place two weeks, and it always takes me about that time to get *en rapport* with my surroundings. Day before yesterday I did think I could write and I just got settled down to my thinking. I had my paper and my blotters all ready and had adjusted the right color to my mood. I was even meditating the first line of free verse, something like this... Here Letitia began measuredly to quote.

I saw in a feathered crest of red top...

or

My dreams in a feathered crest of red top...

- Is red top a kind of bird? asked the Midshipman to fill the pause.

- Grass, my dear, does it sound like a bird?

- I suppose it was the feathered crest, admitted Beatrice ruefully.

Mrs. Swan gave vent to a loud horse-like laugh.

- I wish it had been a bird, drat it, she cried. For a bird came and took all the grass out of my head.

- A real bird? ventured the timid Midshipman.

- Yes, a real bird. It perched up there in the tree. I began.

I saw in a feathered crest of red top...

And then that little bird...

" Peep! " - It went as cute as a little kitten. So you are there for company, I said. Well, I must go on with my poem.

I dreamed in a feathered crest of red top...

Which is better, saw, or dreamed? Dreamed conveys the more poetic idea, but dreamed is so over worked in poetry. If I only knew what was to follow! and then...

" Peep! " went that confounded little bird. I spied about and tried to get a look at him, but not a horn, hide, or hair could I see. Finally, I went back to my poem.

I saw in a feathered crest of...

then... " Peep! " went that God damned little bird.

Mrs. Swan was telling this so dramatically, with humor smiling out of her brown eyes, that by this time the Midshipman was shrieking with laughter and wiping the tears from her cheeks.

- I searched for a stone, continued the poetess in heated narrative. But devil of a stone could I find. This boulder was the only one I could see and if temper would have lifted it, that bird would have been a goner. I tramped up and down these meadows looking for a stone till I was hot as a furnace. I ran around the tree and hollered shoo! till my voice was as hoarse as a crow's. But never a bird did I see. Though that

day I didn't hear it any more and finally I got to sleep on the bench.

When the Midshipman stopped laughing, Letitia took up her story.

- Well, yesterday, I thought I would try it again. But I decided I would start another theme. I have been thinking of a poem on the sea, just this glimpse as I get it beneath the oak branch and sheltered on the sides by the hills. So I began:

Opaque false medium...

That was good, wasn't it? False, because the sea isn't really opaque, but it seems so with the sun shining on it. Well, I was just ready for a verb and was considering, when that bird began again.

" Peep! "

I made up my mind I wouldn't notice him. There isn't any bird I said over and over. Then it went again.

" Peep! "

Then I tried to think I liked to have it there. Yes sweetheart, I hear you, I called to it.

Opaque...

" Peep! "

Opaque...

Yes, rose bud, I know.

Opaque, false medium...

Well, damn you, why don't you say peep? I miss it. And actually, you know, I did miss it. And I swear to you I couldn't write another word.

- Has it been here today? asked the Midshipman after the risibilities were quieted.

- No, it hasn't, but I have expected it every minute. I filled my bag with oranges, thinking I would drive it away if it came. And then the oranges smelled so good I ate them all; there were five. They say they are bad for the liver. Do you think they'll hurt me? But anyway I couldn't write on a full stomach. I tried to take a nap on the bench, but I think I must have slept too much yesterday. Oh, this literary life is no joke!

- Why, you look right up to Mr. Plummer's gateway if you turn a little! It's just clear of the corner of the boulder!

- Yes! said Letitia a little confusedly as if an explanation was expected, and she really had not any to give.

- I should think it might distract your attention from the blotters. You say the sight of any house takes your thoughts.

- Well, his gate is shut most of the time and I don't see anything but the vines. There are very few people going there in the day time. I can't answer of course, for the night.

- Oh, I don't suppose you're down here in the night... The Midshipman seemed a trifle embarassed. You couldn't very well see to write by moonlight and a lantern would be awkward I imagine.

- Still moonlight is good enough to see some things by, said Letitia in a manner of darkly hinting.

- John and I don't have any trouble, laughed Beatrice. He paints moonlight beautifully, you ought to see. I might take you to his studio some day.

- I avoid studios and men, as a rule. What is this I hear about Mrs. Duke's party?

- Just a frolic. We are all to be invited. The men are to dress as women and the women as men.

- I think the idea is disgusting.

- Oh, just some sport, among friends. I have sent for a suit of my brother. A real midshipman, you know he is in the navy.

- What do you think I would look well as?

The poetess began to show signs of interest.

- Why don't you go as a jockey? I have a pair of riding breeches and boots. I got them for long jaunts and have never worn them. I can make you a beautiful cap.

- I have a good figure for it. Don't you think so?

- Stunning! I'll conceal your hair with the cap.

- I wonder what Cecily will wear, speculated the Chief Steward, after she had decided the jockey would do.

- Something oriental, I fancy.

- How ridiculous the men will look in skirts! That is one thing remarkable about a woman: if she wants to take a man's place she can, but for a man to be a woman is absurd.

- A woman is more adaptable, said Beatrice.

- There you hit the nail on the head. A woman can understand a man better. I should say to general-

ize a little, that any woman can understand any man, but no man can understand any woman. In fact, I have written that down. I am preparing a book of epigrams for publication.

- Well, I am sure I can't understand Mr. Plummer. I should think he would marry Charlotte Gaylord. When he does I will say I understand him. I think she is perfectly sweet.

- Another woman is winding him around her finger. You can interpret a man's actions by his vanity.

- I should think his vanity would be appeased by the fidelity of Charlotte.

- There, my dear, you put your finger on the situation. His vanity is appeased but it is also doubled by the fidelity of Charlotte toward him and the infidelity that he sports toward her. Oh, I wish I were in her shoes for a moment! I would make him crawl and bite the dust. And some day she is going to do it. Mark my words. Charlotte is not all gentleness and forbearance. When she gets him she will tame him, or I'm no prophet.

- I don't think so; she's all sensitiveness and feeling.

- Well, feeling and sensitiveness too are weapons that make a man tremble, if properly wielded, and Charlotte Gaylord is no fool I can tell you. In that she is different from Cecily Blount, who throws herself at a man's head like a pumpkin.

- A pumpkin, if it hits a man's head, is liable to knock him over, sighed Beatrice.

- But he gets up again, and the pumpkin is busted. I know what I am talking about.

- Well, for my part, I wouldn't have anything to do with a man who had been bowled over. And I think Charlotte will show the same spirit.

- Good Lord, girl, every man has been bowled over a dozen times. There are thousands of women who make a business of bowling.

- Men needn't be nine pins all the same.

- Needn't be: but you'll find that they are. I'll bet dollars to doughnuts John has had his tumbles.

- Well, I have been in love twice myself. And John is a little soft, that's a fact. But the women are as bad as the men.

Mrs. Swan grew moody for a moment.

- Even Captain Cody has her weaknesses, I fancy, she said finally. Though she does succeed in covering them pretty well.

- You mean...? The Midshipman was breathless.

- Well, I don't have a view of that Man's gateway for nothing. I see who likes to take a little promenade.

- I thought it would be Sylvia rather than the Captain. Miss Howard is such a responsive little soul.

- There is a fine woman, pronounced the Chief Steward.

- Oh, yes, she is the favorite everywhere. I don't think even Charlotte would be jealous of her.

- She needn't be. But the other, look out!

They were interrupted by the bell to dress for

dinner.

. . . . . .

- Matey! exclaimed Captain Cody of the Morganatic, pausing in her pacing of the quarter-deck and glancing down fondly on Sylvia Howard, who, stretched out on one of their ship's bunkers, was dreamily gazing out the port-hole. - Matey, even the Midshipman is getting it... I refer to our disease: the mal-de-mer-man.

- Oh, I don't think so, Cody, replied Sylvia. To speak in sea terms, they are only chumming in a companion way.

- Stand away and hold fast there, now, darling, and don't get cleverer than your superior officer. It's dangerous. It has cost many a young gallant his promotion.

- What have you noticed lately that makes you think them intimate?

- Well, from known latitude and longitude we make a dead reckoning. My longitude is, the Midshipman is a devilish little fascinator, and my latitude is, that the Man takes all the latitude there is.

- I think he is only sporting about.

- And she is sporting, too, but I see breakers. They're well off to the leeward, but there are breakers.

- She'll tack and luff before she strikes them.

- It's difficult to luff when under heavy canvas. I think we ought to put a flea in her ear.

- She'd resent it. I think it wouldn't do, Cody.

- Then you must think of something. Make love

to him yourself. I really am very partial to the Midshipman.

- She's a dear, but don't you think she is anchored to John?

- I suspect John of being only a kedge. I take it a kedge yields in a stiff gale.

- A little yielding is a good thing for high spirits. I wish we had kedges for husbands.

- Why, surely you don't feel a strain on your main mast!

- My sails are all furled, Sir, and bound with their thimbles. But sometimes I long to spread them and pull on the hawser.

- And drag the kedge?

- If only I had a kedge to drag. I begin to see the advantages of matrimony.

- Really, my dear, you alarm me.

- Why, haven't you often said the same thing? If only now I were married, say to Mr. Morgan, and I were this ship's owner, and you her Captain, wouldn't we dare to heave on board this Man?

- We tried to heave once and the crew mutined. I sometimes think we made a mistake in landing our first passengers.

- I suppose you will go to their party?

- Certainly, my dear, I shall go as the Lord High Mayor of London. Won't you go as my page?

- I was planning to go as a Russian gypsy. You know, I have a costume... I packed the jacket in and I can make the rest.

- You will be the best one of them all. And I want you to outshine that unspeakable Turk.

- I think she calls it Persian, but no matter.

- I'll lend you my bracelets for ear-rings, and your riding boots will answer very well. What is Charlotte Gaylord going to wear?

- She's borrowed a plaid suit from the Misogynist and is going as a gambler, I believe.

- Humph! Well, tis the land of Bret Harte. But all this is taking us far from the Midshipman.

- Now, Cody, you positively must not meddle. The Midshipman has more ballast than you or I.

- Ballast! I scorn ballast. I cast it overboard. By God, I wish a sand bag would strike that Man on the head.

- Sand bag the Man all you want to, Sir. But the Midshipman is a free spirit and should remain one.

- I believe you are right, Mr. Howard, and I thank you for towing on behind. It is a weakness of mine that I take too much wind sometimes, and I am sensitive on the subject of the Midshipman.

- Even the Doctor is going to the party. She took me to her room and showed me her costume. It is pirate and she has made hat and boot tops out of wrapping paper. They really look like leather and flop wonderfully. And you ought to see her pistols and her cutlass! Everything made out of card board and express paper. She really presents a swagger figure.

- It's you, Matey, for getting all the confidences. Are the antediluvian passengers going, too?

- Yes, as old tars. They've got things from the shops in Santa Barbara.

- Oh, darn the novel! I wish it was written, and we could go in for larks all the winter.

- We pretty much are, don't you think? I haven't written a line since I came here. And Letitia Swan...

- Wait, I will compose a Letitia Swan. No one shall say I have not committed literature before turning into the Lord High Mayor. Listen, I'll do a line and then you. Now don't beat me, Matey. Do be stupid.

They began reciting with sonorously measured accent.

THE CAPTAIN:

I see a thread of palest silver fluttering from the tail of my cat.

THE MATE:

It has been discharged from the third ring of her tail. I count the rings from the tip.

THE CAPTAIN;

Like the petal of a belated plum blossom it flutters down, a plum blossom that blooms in the autumn,

THE MATE:

Faint into my soul-thought it flutters and I am saddened without knowing why.

THE CAPTAIN:

The gravel of the garden walk is mauve. The cat's feet embroider a pattern on its

velvet,

THE MATE:

Like a pattern embroidered on my memory. But a wind drives the silver thread afar...

THE CAPTAIN:

And only the embroidered pattern remains on the walk, soon crushed by the sharp jaws of the returning lawn mower.

- Really, Cody, we ought to make a volume. I think we could find a poetry magazine that would review it.

- And think of the satisfaction for Letitia Swan. But seriously, I am worried about the Midshipman. I'm going to consult with the Misogynist.

- Cody, don't!

- Oh, I shan't cite instances, of course. One can talk with the Misogynist without wallowing in personalities.

- And he can talk personalities, too, with great frankness.

- But always holding the real thing back. Drat his discretion! It's the most exasperating kind of frankness there is, when one tells everything but the one thing that's wanted. It's like eating artichokes without getting at the core.

- The leaves bear the most delicate flavor.

- There is no denying it, we're running out of sea-dog, Matey. I mean to say the bulk-head of the Mis-

ogynist's knowledge is stored in the hold.

- And he only tosses us the spars and scuppers, Sir. But with those given we can create a whole ship.

. . . . . .

The Yacht party, as Mrs. Duke laughingly called it, had been a great success for the Midshipman. In the first place she had looked very natty and very saucy in her brother's suit. In the second place, John, clad in one of her own evening gowns, had been a regular society belle, and he had played the piano an hour, by the clock, for the dancing on the veranda. In the third place, because she was deprived of her partner, Mr. Plummer had danced with her most of the time. He said his character was that of a sailor's sweetheart and therefore it was fitting they should be together. He had certainly played the part with propriety but there had been a touch of some knowledge underneath that made Beatrice feel that he knew somewhat of sailors and their sweethearts, and she thought of her brother, with a positively wicked thrill of joy, for the fact that he was away in the world for himself and not being watched by their mother.

She had intimated as much to the Man when they were walking on the beach while Cecily Blount was dancing. Mr. Plummer had explained he could not see her as it would upset his idea of his picture.

Yes, the Man had admitted there were advantages of being away from one's mother, but he himself, having left home when he was very young, had always

thought of his years of adolescence with regret because he had not known the purity of a home and a mother.

Whereupon, the shocking Beatrice had argued what was the use of all this purity in the home, when in reality it did not exist there, the outwardly sainted mother carrying on a separate life with the father that could only be explained by the word hypocrisy when the son should realize the facts later on. And then, she had added, what is all this purity talk, in childhood and adolescence, when it is to be overturned by the youth when he is a man. Is not the result of the shock of an impure world, a shock that he is sure to receive, much more ruinous to the foundations of his character, especially if they have been founded on made ground?

And at this Mr. Plummer had sighed and admitted that he was thankful for the knowledge of the world in his adolescence. That it had taught him the use of pleasure and the need of restraint, and kept him from many an unjust judgment of others.

Then, Cecily Blount had come out on the beach and dragged him in to see her in a new dance she was creating.

But the serious talk on the beach had been pleasant. There is something very cosy, walking on the flat hard beach, at night, with the waves slipping up to one's feet, but stopping and never wetting, they are in such control. They seem so mysterious running in from the darkness, and they have messages to whisper of the wide world and the island shores they

have laved, with palm trees and strange brown people running naked.

Mr. Plummer had proved a fascinating dancer. He did not know the steps, like John and Ben, and there was not the childish delight of skipping about adroitly. But he had a way of taking his partner in his arms that was protecting and made her willing to yield to him. What matter about the step of a waltz, for instance, if one gets the rhythm, the poetry of the music? In Mr. Plummer's dancing, the music did not seem to be the inspiration of his movement. It was the medium in which his body floated, he actually swam it, took the floods in his arms.

When she told him of this, he had said he was very fond of swimming and perhaps it was something the same sensation he got in dancing... Only, he added gallantly, dancing has the advantage of allowing me to rescue a girl and hold her to my breast.

Now the Midshipman had denied that she had ever been in that position and asked him if he prefered dancing with Cecily Blount.

He had intimated that one little strand of the Midshipman's sunshine hair, brushing against his cheek, was more than the wealth of ten dancers in his arms.

And the Midshipman had apologized for her hair getting so frowsy but that it was actually bursting from that absurd little hat.

When she had reproved him mischievously for not dancing with Charlotte and the others, he had replied

that to dance with any of them would seem significant and now to dance with her all the time was so evidently a harmlesss flirtation. Besides, in so short a round, for it was certain John's endurance had a limit, it would be impossible to dance with them all, as politeness would require. Besides, they, too, were enjoying themselves, and why worry? Mr. Morgan and Quinn were doing the honors.

Mr. Morgan, who was magnificently gotten up as a Jewish matron, wig, heavy complexion and red eyelids, was impartially dealing out his attentions, supplemented as he was by the blonde Misogynist, a beauty of a certain age in full evening toilette. Ben danced with Tessie, as a matter of course. She was a Bowery swell and he was a Bowery maid and they succeeded in making sport for everybody.

Once, when Mr. Plummer and the Midshipman had gone out into the avenue of eucalyptus trees that were towering and massive by the cottage and he wished to show her the effect against the stars, she had asked him about the possible futures for Ben and John and had been pleased to learn what a warm interest he took in all young painters.

It is not so important whether we make great art or not, he had said to her. The important thing is a chance for self expression and free work. If they are in earnest, always encourage them and assist them. People make a fetish, these days, of results.

Then, she brought the subject around again to Charlotte. She now found great pleasure in her paint-

ing.

She did one time, Mr. Plummer had said seriously. But now she seems to be losing interest. It is the old story; in the end the woman comes to claim the artist.

The Midshipman was just ready to launch out that Charlotte should marry, and follow up with a little eulogy on all her domestic virtues, when they were interrupted by Captain Cody and the Chief Steward, who actually had come out to call them in to supper.

Mrs. Duke wore the costume of a cook and in every way the party had been merry.

The morning after, the Midshipman wanted to talk things over and finally decided to choose the Doctor for her confidante. Miss Maxwell had been the sensation of the evening in her pirate costume and Mr. Morgan and all the men had paid her especial compliments.

Beatrice found her, neatly gowned in a dove-blue morning dress, but she had not opened up her microscope as yet, though she was sitting at her table before the window.

On the microscope desk was a rose in a glass. Beatrice recognized it as one from the rambler that half-covered one side of the stables. It was of the variety known as the Gold of Ophir, one of these indescribable perfections of floriculture that seem to combine all the beauty of all the roses and to add something of human beauty as well in the texture of the flesh of its petals, still painting on that metallic lustres of gold and of green and of lilac.

- It has no scent, complained the Doctor, while Beatrice was exclaiming at its loveliness. I, too, thought it the acme of the garden until Mr. Morgan complained it had no scent. Even the thorns are gold and mahogany and the foliage is the marvel of a Cellini. But now I can think of nothing else than what Mr. Morgan has said. It has no scent, it is an artificial rose.

- Drop a little perfume in the glass, suggested the Midshipman. I think it is the very climax of beauty.

- No, no, Mr. Morgan is right. Better the pink Florentine roses, or the sweet eglantine that grows in the fields. That has youth, it has the freshness of the dew. It has the spirit of the breath of the morning.

- But, Miss Maxwell, look at this warm flush on the yellow and the whole sprinkled over with dust of green. I don't see what beauty you find in youth. Maturity has a thousand subtle shades.

- It has that, but not having youth, all the subtleties are but powder of ashes.

- Well, I will bring you a whole sheaf of the pink roses and you shall give me this exquisite one instead. I am always afraid of the thorns. Mr. Morgan told me they were poisonous.

- You may better leave this on the glass. It is more fitted to me and my surroundings.

- But, Miss Maxwell, you and your surroundings are perfect. You were the youngest one of the party, last night.

- Only a semblance of youth, my dear. I have nothing that can compare with your years.

- I'm sure when I am fifteen years older, I will be fat and blowsy and horrid.

- No matter, you are young now. Enjoy it. I realize now I threw away my youth.

- What matter! if you find it later on, you know how to cherish it, to appreciate it.

I can never be brought to your way of thinking, laughed the Midshipman. Now, last night, I found the the conversation of Mr. Plummer in every way more satisfying than that of Ben or John. Of course, the boys are more fun. I like them too, but one gets a content out of the experience that comes from years.

- I thought the same as you when I was a schoolgirl. I admired the professors, my teachers more than I did the boys. But Mr. Plummer proved himself a man of thinking. He did not waste his time on the older women.

- Oh, that silly costume made him feel like a frolic. In his every-day habit he would think me a green school-girl. I wish Miss Gaylord had worn something pretty, like Sylvia Howard. Charlotte always is trying to appear her very worst. She really is beautiful, don't you think so?

- She has beauty, but there are signs of its passing. It is better never to have beauty than to have it and lose it.

- But Charlotte is young, the same age as Sylvia. And Sylvia's beauty is not passing, I am sure.

- Miss Howard has a spiritual buoyancy that keeps her fresh. Miss Gaylord is inclined to melancholy and

perhaps envy.

- But not jealousy... do you think?

- Jealousy comes later; it is the result of a love enjoyed and then... then the joy for some reason has ceased. But why should I be talking of love? I am a scientist and not a poet like the others.

- A scientist perhaps can talk about it with more observation, laughed Beatrice. And then even if you are a scientist, Miss Maxwell, you are a human being much like us all.

- Now that we are on the subject of poets, said the Doctor, I wish we could do something for Letitia. She is unhappy and lonely and awkward but she has talent and she has a very kind heart. She thinks a great deal of you, by the way.

- Tell me, what is the matter with Mrs. Swan? Does she really hate men as she says she does? She seemed happy to be playing the part of one last night. Didn't she strut about and talk just like a jockey?

- I don't imagine either you or I an authority on jockeys, but as you say, Letitia did seem to enjoy herself.

- Well, then, if she hates men, she wouldn't find pleasure in being one, would she?

- My dear, there are some women who go through life always dissatisfied with their sex. It would seem as if they were intended for men in their souls, but their bodies only accent all the weaknesses of women.

- I think Captain Cody more mannish than Mrs. Swan.

- Yes, Letitia's mannishness is assumed. It is usually so with the women who want to be men, or better said, who envy them their masculine privileges. Letitia Swan has a good heart, generous. You must be kind to her, little Midshipman. You must remember that you have resilence and youth.

Beatrice went off to find the Chief Steward at once and the ship's Doctor still did not open her microscope. Instead she sat looking at the rose in the glass. The young girl had been right about its beauty and the perfume, as suggested, might be added. Miss Maxwell rose, went to her dresser, and brought out a tiny flask of old cut crystal. It contained a few drops of attar of roses that a friend had brought for her from Ispahan. With one of her dissecting needles she let a tiny drop fall in the heart of the flower, and then sat long inhaling its rich fragrance. But her mood changed as her watch marked the minutes. She took the rose in her fingers and slowly plucked it to pieces, tossing the petals one by one into her waste basket. Then she threw the perfumed water out the window and put away the crystal flask whence she had taken it.

- I am getting in my dotage - she told herself aloud, and she drew out her microscope and set to work.

. . . . . .

It was the hour to be dressing for dinner, but the Midshipman gave little heed to it. She was ashamed.

Yes, she admitted it, she had been tried and

found wanting. She had done wrong, she had been weak, she had yielded, and in yielding she had found weakness sweet.

It all came about in that canyon with the sunlight on the spotted trunks of the sycamores. Those splotches of pale green are sin. Even the trees themselves have the curves of the snake in Eden. Ah! Eden, now she realized it was beautiful, gold sands, and dashing waters over boulders: pink and lilac with purple shadows like the hills. And overhead the blue depths of the sky across which the white messenger clouds were racing, telling of their treachery to the sea, as if the water could not tell it in gentler fashion.

It all came about from that look she had given him when she told him he would find her riding in the canyon. She had not told him that she would have Charlotte with her. That was the legitimate silence of her plot. She had planned to have him meet them, riding along, and then she would gallop ahead on sudden pretext and he would naturally have to linger behind with Charlotte, to protect her since she was a timid rider and then... well, the canyon would do the rest: the crossing and recrossing of the water, the sheltering hills and precipices to hold them in, the sky above to suggest to them their heaven. There was no doubt in her mind even now but what the canyon and the horses would do their share. Horses love to be crowding together and then they shy and they scamper, which makes situations where a fearful damsel and a protecting squire are sure to become together. Oh yes,

the canyon had done its part and so the horses would have done theirs but she, the Midshipman, had been treacherous, and now she was ashamed to be seen.

He had met them at precisely the romantic place she had intended. Like a centaur he rode down upon them, his brown suit blending in with the chesnut stallion, his hair and beard of the living nature of its mane.

And Charlotte looked very pretty on the black mare, quite the princess in her black hat and habit, dashed with the flecks of white at cuffs and collar, defiant with the white plume overhead.

In her own dress the Midshipman had been studied. The old blue with the saucy jockey cap. Her strawberry roan, too, was in no way stylish or romantic. Just a chuckle headed little mustang from the plains.

Well, they had been surprised or had pretended to be surprised Charlotte did not need any pretense in this for she had thought Mr. Plummer was with a party. In fact, Mr. Morgan had told her he was going and she had understood that Joe was to assist. Also Mr. Plummer was surprised for he had thought the Midshipman would be alone. For does a lady make a tryst and bring her rival? Ah, he did not know that the Midshipman was so sly!

He had wheeled and accompanied them, however, they were going up the stream when he had been coming down. They had chatted; it was dificult in the narrow road to ride three abreast and the wily Midshipman spurred her pony on ahead.

At the moment when she thought they were getting personal, she had touched her spur to her pony's flank and thrown the reins on its neck, who knew what that meant and was away like the wind, clattering over stones, padding over sand and splashing fleet hoofs in the gay water. In all this the Midshipman had remained loyal, in all ways up to this point she had been true. It was the Man who made the trouble, who spoiled the game. Why had she not stopped when she saw it was defeated? At least, they could all have ridden home together, and perhaps she could have tried another ruse.

For, no sooner had she felt herself well under swing of the rapid gallop that she realized that the Man had also spurred his horse. He was calling to her, anxiously, perhaps he thought her pony had become unmanageable; men are such fools about women! Now Charlotte was the one who needed care.

When the pony heard the clattering hoofs behind, she realized that they were in for a frolic and fairly flattened herself to the fun. At that time it would have been difficult to stop her suddenly for she had indeed taken the bit between her teeth. But still the Midshipman knew this trick of the pony and how to manage it. Her fault was that she was enjoying the flight.

How they sped! The Midshipman bending over, so as to let her body catch as little as possible of the wind. She realized that the chesnut stallion would catch them in the end, but the rough road gave advantage to the Indian pony; she was sure-footed here as a lady in

her parlor. Lower, lower they seemed to crouch to the curving road, louder and louder pounded the clattering hoofs of the pursuing stallion.

Once Beatrice had given a glance behind, her head was bent so low it was very easy to get a glance over her shoulder where the road curved and she knew it would be easy enough to see him.

He was not bending over as she was doing. There was almost a smile of triumph on his uplifted face. He was guiding his steed not leaving it to pick its way as she was doing with her mustang, he was perhaps thinking of a level stretch of sandy road ahead where he realized it would be easy to overtake her.

She would not let him. She bowed again to her pony's neck and they sped out on the stretch like an arrow. But she felt the mustang's hoofs were losing on the soft road, and already the little flanks were heaving.

It was at this point that the Midshipman gave in. It was here that she began to want to be overtaken... Would his great horse over-ride her? She did not care. Would her little mare be crowded in the bushes?...

But if she had known what would happen she would not have slackened. Perhaps she felt then that he would kiss her. The chestnut horse gaining, now neck and neck, with his rein hand the Man had seized the bridle of her pony and his left arm clasping around her as they galloped, for the horses were now gaily a-team together. The Man's face had descended, had come down on hers, his brown eyes were beaming with

the sport of conquest. You little witch!... was all the words he whispered, but he had kissed her on the mouth and on the cheeks, on the brow, on the neck, as they were riding, and his arms had drawn her firmly to his breast and they rode as one being on wild horses.

. . . . . .

Now, she must dress and go to dinner, and meet Miss Gaylord and ask her civilly if she got home all right. She knew that she was home. She had seen the black pony in the stable, probably she had taken a short trail up the hill. It had been necessary for Mr. Plummer and the Midshipman to walk their horses a mile on the sandy roads after they were well out of the canyon with its treacherous green splotched sycamores far behind them.

CHAPTER VI

The Engineer

Charlotte Gaylord was considering an offer of marriage from no less a personage than Mr. Morgan. She had been anticipating the proposal for several weeks, in a way she had even encouraged it, but now that it lay before her in the definite even tones of his remembered voice, (at the time they had been out to watch the sunset and were seated on a westward-looking hill slope,) in a deliberate yet not unimpassioned voice of a man who has been married and knows its seriousness, she was slow about making her decision and was appraising every desire that she possessed.

Mr. Morgan was rich, he was a cultivated gentleman, he was attractive to both men and women, he was not yet out of that period of life known as the prime of manhood, and he had given proof of being a fond and devoted husband. Surely these were not qualities to be thrown aside lightly by one of such

humble talents as herself. For his wealth she had only struggling poverty; for his cultivation only a picked up education; as for age she was not herself in the first flower of youth, having arrived to uncertain years of discretion. As for her hopes in making any man a devoted wife, she had few illusions on that score. She realized she was petulant, peevish. She was jealous, she was envious, she was ambitious; and she knew she had an inclination toward gloominess that might develop into bitterness as she grew older. She did have sincerity that was one asset and she possessed a certain beauty that might ripen, at least that would not fade with her fading youth. If she had been naming her talents three years ago, she would have put her creative art instinct at the head of the list and would have egotistically considered it out-valuing everything. But during that three years of dire experience, she had come to find that many girls were talented in the same way. She had observed the enthusiasms of feminine youth and their products as they studied under some adored master, and then when they had started out for themselves, how they had lost their visions in the dreary wastes of sand. The mirage of their desert had receded, and in many cases had gradually disappeared. Her own had been drifted under in a simoon of passion. She was not sure that it would ever emerge again.

What had she now that would develop, that wealth and a gracious husband would nurture? She was honest and would not take advantage of a man's weakness to drive a bargain. If she could not give Mr. Morgan as

much as he gave her, she would never never enter into contract.

She knew she loved beauty still and could appreciate it. This she could share with him and both gain in the partnership. Beauty of dress.., yes, she could make herself regal; beauty of a home... there he need not ever be ashamed of her: furniture, pictures, objects of art, garden, landscape effects, music... Also she loved poetry and literature, and with opportunity she could grow and be his complement. Then, too, she liked people, she could entertain his guests, she could make a gracious hostess and sympathetic. She could attract young men and women to their home, and the older ones would not be turned away unless she willed it. She could help him help others who had talent. She saw herself a patroness of the arts. True she had always hated patronesses, but she, having been an artist, might be different. She would turn out this ambitious forward set of literary pretenders and take on some friends who had some germs of humility and devotion.

In an uneasy vague way she realized that this immediate situation might be her danger... She might accept Mr. Morgan's offer through petty spite. It would be such a stroke for her to announce some evening at the dinner table that she was to become the mistress of this villa and the much speculated at income that went with it. How quietly, how modestly she would announce it! How simply she would receive their envious congratulations! No, she must not yield to this weakness. It was a victory that would be for-

gotten in a day. For all that it was none the less a tempting triumph and she desired it. She was chafing bitterly under the position that she now endured. Mr. Morgan had allowed her expenses here, putting it that she would help Mrs. Stowe to manage the place. It was not known to the other boarders just what she received for this office but she felt that they looked on her as a pensioner... she especially resented the fact that Miss Cody had been elected their Captain, or that she had crowded in and forced her own election. What should have been the head of the table had become the foot, and it was the Captain who shouldered all the honors.

As it simmered down in her ratiocination, it was Miss Cody, and Miss Cody alone, that she hated. The others were but followers of that leader. Sylvia Howard, she genuinely admired and was fond of, notwithstanding the fact that she was absurd in her adoration of her Captain as she so worshipfully termed her friend. Letitia Swan she also liked and also pitied; the villa if in a wife's hand, should be her refuge. Cecily Blount would go quickly by the board, it was true. But no one would regret her, not even Captain Cody. Beatrice Knox would be retained on good behavior, and Miss Maxwell, well, there was no harm in the Ship's Doctor. Mrs. Duke was already disposed of, and the passengers, Miss Reamer and Miss Clark, would disappear; as a matter of fact, they had not even appeared on her horizon; they were a convenience on the account book of Mrs. Stowe. Mrs. Stowe would continue

to hold her position as general administratrix. She had inherited her place from the days of the first wife. In no way was Charlotte Gaylord jealous of the first Mrs. Morgan. She was proud of her memory even and her husband's respect. Charlotte, herself, had loved before and still loved. Also Mr. Morgan knew it, and accepted it. So she could accept her husband with his love. They would both respect the loves that lay behind them.

Yes: she still loved Joe Plummer, the graceless Joe, and here was the crux, the obstacle to the whole proposition. She would marry him to morrow if she could get him, though she regretted it and were miserable the day after. And not for triumph would she marry him, not for jealousy. Her jealousy would but begin when she had secured him. Secured? did she tell herself? She was not so foolish, not so vain. She doubted if he would be secured for a single week. Joe was a Juan, not a Joseph. She would live to fight for every loyal kiss he gave. No, if she married Joe, it would not be for any delusion as to fidelity. She would marry him because she loved him... simply that.

And what had Joe Plummer to give her that would compare with the gifts of Alec Morgan? Money he had not, would never have. He was too much of a spendthrift and good liver. Neither position, would he give her as an artist's wife... a successful portrait painter stands never high in the world of artists. His patrons or rather patronesses, they were all women, would look down on her somewhat condescendingly, as the artist's wife. Probably even much of their patronage would

dwindle. A married man would not command the commissions of a bachelor. They would go through the world half way between bohemia and respectability, neither flesh fish nor fowl. They would quarrel, wrangle, part, perhaps divorce, but she would marry him. She would marry him because she loved him. The question was merely: would he marry her? This winter would tell her fate, perhaps; perhaps leave it dangling. At the end of these winter months she could still accept Mr. Morgan, but was that fair to Mr. Morgan, and even fair to herself? Could she respect herself becoming the wife of Mr. Morgan when she was doing so because cast off by another? She decided in all sincerity she could not. It was the wife of Joe Plummer, or it was failure.

If only she had a confidante to talk things over! Talking serves to clarify one's mind! She reviewed the list of women that were at hand. She knew precisely what each would say before she consulted her. Mrs, Duke, for example, would be "for". Mrs. Swan "against", and then gradually she would veer around for her own future profit and be clamoring "for" as hot-foot and hot-breathed as any. Of course, Cecily Blount and Marion Cody were out of the question as confidantes and Sylvia Howard would talk it over with her hero, the Captain. There was only Beatrice Knox left: she was a young thing, but there was the fatuous hope that she would stand for the poor man and the first love. At any rate, she would be an enthusiastic eager listener. Charlotte was actually coming to the

point of a confidence in the sycamore canyon and then Joe had appeared, like the Angel Gabriel without his trumpet, and then, the cherub had taken wings and flown away and the foolish Gabriel had turned tail and gone madly pounding after in a chase that even Charlotte in her jealousy could not divine the finish... so strong was her loyal affection for the cherub and so ignorant was her horsewomanship of runaway ponies. Indeed she had acccepted the shame-faced explanation in good faith. Horses are liable to take the bit in their teeth, it was a trick of the mustang that even Mr. Morgan had cautiously mentioned. It was no doubt the gallant if not the necessary thing for Joe to rescue her and it seemed both had narrowly escaped a tumble when he caught her. They might easily have killed the horses and themselves.

At the same time Charlotte felt peevish, even resentful. Why should the pony have taken the bit between its teeth at that moment? And why when it had been forced to spit the bit out, had not the two riders returned to accompany her? As it was, she had ridden on and not found them and had finally taken a short-cut home through the lanes. There the stable-boy had rendered her uncomfortable with his assurances. Mr. Plummer was a fine horseman. It was all right. But he would telephone to Mrs. Downing who lived at the head of the canyon and ask her if they had passed safely... which they were just doing as it turned out at that moment, soberly walking their horses that were wet and foaming. Well, Charlotte could give her con-

fidence to Beatrice some other time. But strange to say she was no longer in the humor for confidences as the days passed, nor were either of them in the humor for further riding expeditions alone, though they both pretended to each other with daily enthusiasm and eagerness that there was nothing else in the world that they so much longed for, and they must surely make an appointment for tomorrow.

In her isolation, Charlotte began to think of the Doctor, and to cultivate an acquaintance there at least. Scientists, she told herself, were used to viewing things in the abstract, and might be interested in a general hypothesis without becoming curious about individual cases.

She did not know enough of scientific methods to realize that before formulating a working hypothesis the scientist makes a tabulation of facts, and then arranges an explanation that will cover them, Now Dr. Maxwell had no facts whatever pertaining to relations of the sexes. Reproduction of unicellular organisms, it is true, had been her special study, but she had only vaguely connected her results with applications to more complex orders, and these were followed with a swift rush of shame on her part, for she had trespassed on realms of thought not suitable to a lady, at least, not a spinster of refinement.

So it was that whatever hypotheses Miss Maxwell had to offer were as far from the scientific as possible. They were, indeed, of the most romantic nature, handed down from literature of the Middle Ages by people

who had never verified them. Eloise and Abelard was her favorite love story. Paul and Virginia gave her delight, though she always did blush for Virginia to think that Paul should have ever made such base proposals.

- Do you think a woman should marry for love?... Charlotte had asked her on one occasion. They were sitting on a stone bench in the garden backed in against some laurels and bay.

- Not unless one is fitted for marriage, was the Doctor's immediate answer, but with a start. Love was a word to be spoken only in reverence with her, like God with some pious thoughtful Puritan.

- I suppose none of us are fitted for it, when it comes to that. Certainly most men aren't... mused Charlotte.

- You mustn't take Letitia Swan's sayings too seriously, rejoined the Doctor. Because she happened to be unfortunate does not mean that everyone else should be, or has been.

- I wasn't thinking of Mrs. Swan. I don't believe she scorns men as much as she thinks she does. Her reason is because they scorn her. What I was thinking of was... Should one marry a man who is fitted for marriage when one doesn't love him in that way?

- The thing is impossible, unthinkable. Nice people can only marry for one reason.

- And yet - people do marry for position... women do... we often hear about it - don't you think?

- Women, my dear Charlotte, may do so; but you and I are interested only in ladies. I am not speaking

of birth and education only: I am speaking of people of refinement and sensitiveness.

- But if a lady thinks that the man she loves would not make a good husband?

- If her love is deep enough, true enough, it will transform him, in time, into a character worthy of her. Until that transformation is effected, she must not yield to his influence or his wishes.

- Men's characters are often formed and hard to change.

- Then a woman's love must wait. It will be recompensed; if not in this life, perhaps in another. It cannot be that two souls created for each other shall not be brought together in all the aeons of time.

- You look upon our experience here merely as a preparation? asked Charlotte.

- I should say rather as a stage in our progress. In this world, we may not even so much as encounter our affinity, though in stages before, we were together. It may be the Divine Plan that on this earth our souls are to remain alone: a sacrifice, or a punishment may be necessary.

- Or we may meet our affinity and find him marrying someone else, suggested Charlotte.

- In that case, he would be unworthy, and not our true affinity. But we are talking generalities, not personalities, of course.

- It is the fault of our language, I suppose: "we" and "you" are so much easier to say than "one "... our English unfortunately lacks the reflexive verbs.

From reflexive verbs, the conversation drifted into dress-making. And, all the time, Charlotte Gaylord was secretly wondering whether Dr. Maxwell had ever been in love.

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But whether Letitia Swan should receive her confidence or no, she would none the less pronounce judgment on the matter.

- I tell you, Charlotte, when you decide to marry, marry for money, and not for love. A man's poverty will incur the contempt of the noblest woman.

They were sitting on a cliff that immediately overlooked the sea. They had been exploring the grounds of one of the wealthy residents who was this year taking a young bride through Europe.

- Do you suppose this woman, here, will be happy, married to a man thirty years her senior? I wonder if she will not finally regret her village school-teaching, after she has been sated with her touring and her castle?

- My dear, we all regret our youth. Even I regret the love of Mr. Swan. But the balm to a woman's regrets is worldly goods. And you must admit that the toy castle behind us contains many comforts for a woman.

- They say he is hardly received in society.

- What need she care? She was not born to the life anyway. She will take all the more satisfaction in her husband. After all, these society lions bring home

very lean pickings to their dams. They prefer the variety of feasting in the jungle, and if the wife is trailed after, she only gets the horns and hoofs to chew on.

- Dr Maxwell thinks marriage without perfect love is absolutely impossible for people of refinement.

- O fiddlesticks for Priscilla Maxwell and her theories! What does she know of either marriage or love? The love between man and woman is a passion that cools as soon as its ends have been accomplished. Real love, the love that endures between human beings, is the Platonic love, and that is found most often between individuals of the same sex. A man's love for a man is often life-long, and a woman's love for a woman should be so, but we are such blasted fools as to be forever running after false gods. I thank Heaven that in my old age I have my eyes open. Now, I choose my friends from among women.

- But you tell me you are always getting tired of old friends!

- And seeking new ones, and finding them, too... yes, I know it: but is not that an evidence that I have faith in my theory? And someday I will find my true friend... I know it.

- And you think this girl, this village school teacher, for instance, will find a life-long friend in her husband?

- She may; and she may not; that depends. But at any rate, she will have a hospice for other women, and if she finds a friend among them, she can retain her.

- But so many young wives look among young men for their friends.

- In Europe, maybe so; not in America. America leads the world in the art of friendship. You find this idea brought out by all our poets and our novelists... Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Emerson, Whittier, Fenimore Cooper, Bret Harte, and finally, Walt Whitman. Even Poe was influenced by it strongly, but his aesthetic romanticism was European. America's contribution to loyalty is that of comrades; or, the word of the young people I like better... chums. I am going to write a volume on it someday.

- But do you think women can be chums like the men? We meddle with each other's affairs too much, and then we separate.

- That is our weakness, as I have said. We are running after illusions - the great chimera. We fancy we can make a chum of a man, a husband, and the first pretty face he sees, he runs after it; and we can only curse Heaven, and grow cattish.

- We hate other women who get men to run after them.

- Precisely!... While men like a man all the better if they see him running after a woman.

- It would appear from what you say that we are narrow minded.

- Our minds are broad enough... broader than the men's when it is a question of freedom from prejudices and conventions. The fault lies in our narrow education. And the men force this education on us... the

poetess began to speak fiercely... They foster it and nourish it in every way that appeals to our vanity... This "Mother Love" idea, for example, is a creation of the men to keep us docile.

- You don't mean to deny that a mother loves her children?

- Now you are getting heated purely out of prejudice. You have never had a child... no more have I... but before we speak from observation of others, we will turn for a moment to ourselves... Which loved you most, your father or your mother?

- Why, my father! But I think that was an exception.

- Not on your life! It is the rule. My mother hated me. But no matter. I was not the favorite child of my father; but he did admire me, and he taught me independence.

- 'Tis said, fathers love their daughters and mothers, their sons.

- A lie. Mothers love their sons because they look to them for support in their declining years. I don't mean financial support purely. They want moral, religious and affectionate support as well. My proof of this?. Witness how a mother fights the idea of her son's marrying; and if he does take the bit in his teeth and marry against her will, how she hates and nags the wife, and then freezes on to the grandsons in the hope that they will carry out the program her son failed in. As for her daughters, the mother shifts them off on to the first man who comes along who will support them;

and little patience she has with their marrying for love. She even goes out into the highways to hunt for eligible matches and she sets her traps in wiliest fashion.

- You think, then, that mother-love is selfish?

- At bottom, at the root, it is purely that. Of course, a mother will risk her life to preserve her child in danger, but that is for her own future self-protection. A man will sacrifice his life to save another man's child, for that matter, and he won't brag about it either, but this "Mother-Love" theory he trots out on every occasion and tricks it up with all the poetry and oratory he can muster. He knows that if he can persuade the mother that she is noble in staying home and cooking for her children, that incidentally she will be cooking for him, and making his bed, and he will be left undisturbed at his game of lord of the hen-roost to go out in the road when he likes and strut and crow with his neighbors.

- Since you scorn men so, said Charlotte, getting up and following the Chief Steward along the cliff path where the wind of her indignation seemed threatening to hurl her over, I don't see how you can give them credit for so much paternal love. Seems to me you are not altogether consistent.

- My dear!... Mrs. Swan turned and stood oracularly... because I have a contempt for the injustices of men in order that they may keep women enslaved to them, does not deprive me, a woman, from being just to them, and giving them the credit that is their due. As for Father-love as contrasted with Mother-love, you

have only to use your eyes, and look about you. How often, do you read tragedy in a man's face because his child has died, or one has gone wrong, as the world calls it, and, indeed, has not gone right from the point of view of its own individual welfare. A father loves his children for themselves. His affection is faithful through long absence, and he does not wish to monopolize their lives. A mother, on the contrary, wants to sit on her children, and do nothing but interfere with them and boss them, and feed off of them. I am speaking now of general, not exceptional, instances... Yes, I admit that I am a man-hater - damn them! - but I hate them for what they do, not for what they are. In many things, in most things, we women have to learn from them. But we must not accept the rules they have made for our enslavement. We must think out our own rules for ourselves.

- Who is that shouting on the beach below? I declare!... it is the laughter of the Midshipman!

The two women moved to a point on the cliff where they could command a long veiw of the beach. Sure enough two riders were approaching, but being fifty feet below they did not realize they were being observed. It was Beatrice Knox and Mr. Plummer, scampering around the point in the water, for the waves there came up to the cliff except at very low tide. The horses were as gay with the sport of the waves as their riders who had to hold up their feet. They waded sedately where it was deepest, but seemed to realize that the wave would recede. Round the point was a wide strip of

sand where they were usually permitted to make a dash for a half mile before they should turn in at the Duke Cottage and pause puffing in the sand and the sunshine.

- Hello, hello, hello!... called Letitia from above, but they did not hear her; the voice carrying out rather than downward... Besides, there was a swashing of the waves against the cliff.

- Hello, hello, hello!... screamed Charlotte Gaylord, waving her parasol excitedly above her head. She had a sudden wild feeling of delight at seeing the man she loved come riding towards her.

But her cries were not heard any more than those of the Chief Steward, and the riders rounded the point of the projecting cliff. As the horses gained the strip of pounded sand beyond, upon which the crawling waves were also lapping, they broke into swift run of rapid hoof-beats, their backs lowering several inches so it seemed with their bellies lying close to the firm road. Away they went, riders and horses together, the man and the chestnut stallion well ahead but the little strawberry mustang pattering valiantly after, her short leaps running together, they were so rapid, as she scurried like an insect over the sand.

- They didn't hear us!... cried Letitia, with voice still raised as when she was calling out to the distant riders.

- If they did, they pretended not to, replied Charlutte, speaking almost under her breath.

She turned and walked up toward the toy castle with its absurd battlements trying to frown down on

the garden. The parterres of flowers were laid out in bad taste; there was such an evident attempt at being Gesman about everything.

And Charlotte speculated on the fate of the little school teacher who had married this old bachelor and gone to Europe... Did she, possibly, love another than her husband? And if she did not, even then, would she be happy? Was it not better to be an old maid, teaching school?

When the two had returned to the villa, and Charlotte had locked her room door and thrown herself on the bed, she gave way to the weeping that was within her. Like a school-girl, she had a good cry, and when it was over she tried to speculate on the reason:

Suppose they had heard the hailing, what more could they have done than wave their hands and ride on? The cliff at that point was unscalable; if it were, there was no trail for the horses. Probably they had an appointment at "The Yacht" for tea. Why should they not be riding out together?

But the bitterness of calling and not being answered!... and immediately on the delight of seeing their approach! Her jealousy was writhing like a serpent; it could kill something; it had poison in its fangs; which would it strike first at... the man? or the woman? She hated both. She hated all the world... No, it was really herself she hated; and in her passion she seized her own arm with her teeth and bit till there was a red stain of her fierceness. She had to wear a long-sleeved frock to dinner that evening to hide it.

But the fire of it was burning in her eyes.

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After dinner, she singled out Cecily Blount and proposed they should take a stroll in the garden. Usually she chose Beatrice for a companion, or Letitia or Miss Maxwell remained with her.

Cecily was lonely, and glad to have someone to talk with. She had been neglected of late by the others.

- Let us go down to the lower terrace. It is free there, and the walks are longer and less broken, suggested Charlotte.

- Let's go down into the meadows, agreed Cecily.. I love to lie and tumble in the grass.

They stopped at the lonely table of the poetess. The bird had for some time now held sway there alone. Charlotte repeated the story as the Midshipman had told it her. The Midshipman would creep into her thoughts. Cecily had a good laugh at the expense of 'dear Letitia'. She rolled on her back in the grass, gazed at the sunset-colored clouds overhead and regardless of silk dress and laces plucked flower-stems with her white teeth.

- She is a good soul though we do laugh at her, said Charlotte, and I am sorry for her, for she has had an unhappy life.

- Which, of course, has been much her own fault, replied Cecily. She has been with her husband, much as she has been with her poetry-writing, enthusiastic

in the beginning of everything, then growing dissatisfied after the first line, and finding fault and blaming everyone but herself and her own insatiable and unhappy desire. My sympathies are with poor Mr. Swan. From all I can learn, even from her, he has been a long-suffering and kind-hearted partner. If he'd only been brute enough to beat her, she would probably be living happily with him now instead of running about at large cursing men, whom she really likes better than any of us.

- Men don't like her, said Charlotte thoughtfully.

- Of course they don't! and she resents it and then makes herself horrid.

- It is not a woman's fault if the men don't like her.

- It isn't and it is. Take my own case for example. Men don't naturally like me. I accept the handicap and enter the race with women they do like and I mean to win out in the end.

- You mean?

- I mean I take up dancing, not because I think it is the highest art in the world as some dancers claim, I don't think it is, in fact. I look upon it as one of the lower arts instead. But I know it makes me beautiful. It develops my body in graceful movements and curves. I study to get beautiful effects. You know I have not a beautiful figure naturally, you know I have not a beautiful face. I would give my soul to have hair as lovely as Tessie Duke. And she neglects it, exposes it to sun and wind and calls herself sorrel-top. But I study my

face and do my hair to make it seem beautiful. I do it because I want to attract men, I'm not like Miss Cody who gets herself up for women though I do suspect she lies about that even to herself and will come out strong for a man someday when she sees one.

What is the use of being ashamed of our natures? We are created for men aren't we? and men's pleasure? It is as natural for a woman to crave a man as it is for an animal to crave a mate. We are animals aren't we? Why not admit it? For my part, I scorn a woman as sickly and abnormal if she does not desire a man's love and protection.

- Letitia even admits a woman should marry. But she advises her to marry for position and a home.

- Marriage I am not talking about, replied Cecily. I don't say it is not a good thing in its way. I don't think however it would be advisable for her and I am sure it wouldn't be for me for the present. When I am older, when I am tired of the game of man-trapping, - here she stopped to laugh deliciously at her phrase - then, I shall doubtless take Letitia's advice, unless I have position as she terms it already, and money which is what she means, to support me in it.

- You don't think, then, it would be wicked to marry without love?

- Love... love has gone out of fashion. Leave that to the past where it belongs. Now, even the poets write of passion. Love is out of date and doesn't enter.

- Surely you think we are capable of loving still, don't you?

- If we think we love, in nine cases out of ten, it is merely the passion of jealousy at bottom. If we marry a man for love, we marry him to torment him. Look at the marriages around you and admit I judge them rightly. A woman has a passion for a man, yes, a passion that would kill him, torture him, eat him. What ordinarily passes for love in women's minds is nearer hate. I am sick of all their hypocrisies of sacrifice.

- You and Letitia are a good team of woman-haters. She has been giving me a discourse on mother-love this very afternoon.

- My dear, all normal women hate women. They only chat together in order to more successfully plan attacks on the men. Where there is an even balance in numbers of the sexes they often get up some very creditable friendships. Or if the women are left entirely alone they make the best of a famine though their hunger is frightful. But put two or three men in a group of twice or three times as many women and then woman's friendship for woman is a joke.

- I thought it was the nature of the males to fight for the females among animals. And, you know, you said we are animals.

- Your logic may be better than mine, laughed Cecily, but I am still nearer the fact.

Charlotte suddenly moved behind the boulder. Somebody was coming up the road.

Cecily sat up round-eyed.

- It's Mr. Plummer! He's coming early. Let's go and meet him.

- I want to be alone, I have an engagement, faltered Charlotte, but it was doubtful if Cecily even heard her. She had boldly gone forward to meet the artist, calling out, Hello! as she advanced.

Charlotte Gaylord shrank back behind the boulder and blushed in shame. Why had she chosen the lower terrace? Then she waited, thinking they might come down to seek her; she even hoped... no: she did not hope... she could not bear it. But the minutes passed. ..Cecily Blount had evidently gone into the studio, or down the hill for a walk. They did not call her. Probably Joe did not even know she was there. If he did - Charlotte's eyes were now burning... She rose, and walked up the hill quite proudly. She would show him that she preferred to walk alone.

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But Pride is a restless bed-fellow, and all that night she could not sleep. The next morning she did not come down for breakfast. When she called down the speaking-tube for her coffee, it was the Midshipman who appeared with it at the door.

- I asked Blanche if I might bring it... Beatrice apologized... You dont mind, do you? May I sit a little while? Then she arranged the tray neatly on the lamp-stand and plumped down on the edge of the bed like a shaft of sunshine.

Charlotte knew that she was looking miserable with swolen eye-lids... She had tried to remove the

traces of her restlessness in order to meet the maid, but the Midshipman did not seem to notice, looking much of the time out the window that was open to the soft winds of the morning.

- Such a lively ride as I had yesterday afternoon.. she began to chatter... I wish you had been with us, I do, really. Mr. Plummer asked me to accompany him to Santa Barbara, and we came home along the miles of the beach. It is wonderful to have someone riding ahead, and to watch the horse's tracks fill with water, and then suddenly disappear in the rebounding sand. I had hard work to keep up with my mustang.

- I saw you from the cliff, said Charlotte drily... Letitia and I were exploring the Baruch garden.

- So she told me just now at the breakfast table. The sea makes such a roar!... We did not hear you call. We couldn't even hear each other sometimes when we shouted.

- You seemed to be enjoying yourself all the same.

- Oh, the exhilaration is something wonderful along the beach! The waves seem always coming in to catch you. The horses get the spirit of it, too. We fairly flew... and the spray beating in our faces! I thought of my brother in the navy. Have you ever sailed in a yacht? We might make up a party; Mr. Quinn is a great sailor, and has a cat-boat.

- I think a yacht would bore me to death. I can't imagine being cooped up with some people I couldn't get away from. I should become desperate and plunge into the sea.

- It would be a diversion, and Mr. Plummer could rescue you. Tess says he is a magnificent swimmer.

- I suppose Mrs. Duke and he arrange bathing parties.

- Do you really think you are fair to Mrs. Duke? She is like a mother to me, and we have such fun at her cottage.

- I neither care to be fair nor unfair. She is not even antipathetic to me, I do not consider her.

- Oh, well, I suppose each one must choose her own friends. You probably wouldn't like John, and I adore him.

- And how does he take your going riding with Mr. Plummer?

- Oh, John is a dear. He knows Mr. Plummer is not for the likes of me. John and I are of the younger generation.

- Mr. Plummer is not so old.., defended Charlotte. I don't see how you can call thirty four old.

- Well, the Misogynist is only thirty six, and Mrs. Duke says he is like her grandmother.

- Mrs. Duke is forty five if she is a day.

- No: just turned forty!... corrected the Midshipman. She was married at eighteen. Tessie was born within a year, and she was twenty one her last birthday.

- Women don't marry at eighteen. I've seen Mr. Duke: he's antediluvian.

- Oh well, a woman is only as young as she looks.

- Or as young as she acts. That would suit Mrs.

Duke better, I think. But, as I said, her age does not interest me in any way.

- Well, for my part, I think they're lots of fun, and you make mistake by not going there more often. Up here, you have only old maids, and they'll get on your nerves pretty soon; they'll make you morbid.

- Tell Marion Cody that she is an old maid.

- She calls herself a bachelor maid, and it's understood, a man isn't a bachelor till he's old.

- It's too bad we shelved Mrs. Duke. She would have lowered the average years of the Morganatic.

- At least, Tessie would have helped, laughed Beatrice. Did you know she and Ben have renewed their engagement?

- I didn't know it had been broken, droned Miss Gaylord.

- It wasn't broken; but the time had run out. Now they have had it extended. They're pledged to be engaged for a year.

- How silly!

- I think it's wise. Ben is still very youthful, and a year's contract may sober him somewhat. He needs responsibility to steady him. But I think it's very generous of Tessie to grant a year. She might miss a good chance by being promised. Twenty two is a critical time of life for a girl.

- Yes, she's liable to be twenty six, like us old maids, and then her case is absolutely hopeless.

- Well, I am twenty four, and I feel my years. I begin to think it will be John or nothing.

- You might grow up to Mr. Plummer, in time... The sarcasm in Charlotte's voice was ungovernable.

- I believe you're mad because we ran away and left you in the canyon. Do you know what I really intended doing that day? I meant to leave you alone so's he'd propose. I know he was dying to, and is yet for that matter. Why do you always hedge him away? He told me you'd changed dreadfully since he knew you in Chicago. He thinks you're going to marry someone else. I teased him to tell me who it was but he wouldn't. I suppose it's some rich man in Chicago.

- Did he tell you he was dying to propose to me?

- Why, no: he couldn't do that exactly, could he? But I can see he looks sad when your name is mentioned. Naturally I keep mentioning it to egg him on and I assure you he is quite reckless afterwards when we change the subject.

- He seemed so when he dashed after you up the canyon.

- Oh, he was. His rashness was quite overwhelming! Do you know - pursed the Midshipman slyly - when he's exasperated he's a devilish flirt.

- Did he flirt with you? Charlotte was almost uxoriously savage.

- Well, not to say flirt. I'm too young. He says I haven't a mature idea in my curly noddle.

- He is inclined to be puerile at times.

- Yes, that's it, puerile, that's the word. John is quite a grown man beside him.

- Are you engaged to John Battell?

- Oh, dear no: he's engaged to another girl. Of course, he would like to break it, but he can't honorably. It's the girl's place to break the engagement, don't you think?

- Surely, she has only to find out and she will do so!

- About me you mean? You never can tell. She loves him faithfully and thinks no doubt he will come back.

- As no doubt he will when you throw him over. Girls are such pitiful creatures.

- I don't see why a girl is pitiful because she holds on to a good boy like John... retorted the Midshipman growing indignant. You don't realize what a manly soul he is. He's worth a dozen Joe Plummers for constancy.

- I didn't know you called him Joe, Charlotte scorned.

- I don't except when I'm talking to you. You call him that. He told me so himself and he always speaks of you as Charlotte or Lottie.

- He knows I detest Lottie. I have forbidden it. I never answer him when he calls me that. He knows it.

- Well, I don't see any harm in the name. I think it's pretty. At least, as pretty as Trixie or Trix. Mr. Plummer calls me Trix, and I don't hate it. I do think Bee is an ugly name.

- I suppose he calls Mrs. Duke, Irene?

- If you want to know, you'll have to ask her... pouted Beatrice. But she does call him 'Plum' before

everybody.

- Another proof of her vulgarity, said Charlotte... Thank you for bringing me the coffee.

. . . . . .

Beatrice carried her grievance to Mrs. Duke...

- Charlotte is getting so cranky I can't stand her, she exclaimed... and she mopes about the house and looks so martyred that it will drive some of us to suicide out of proxy.

- Mrs. Duke heaved as deep a sigh as her nature was capable of...

- Ah, my dear, you have never suffered the pangs of jealousy!... that is plain. But Miss Gaylord is a fool to let people see it. I'd eat my heart out before I'd let a man see I was pining for him.

- But why doesn't Mr. Plummer go and make it up with her? I'm sure he thinks a lot of her; he says so.

- A man can't make love to a perambulating fountain. It's enough to have a funeral after the wedding. If you want a man, laugh at him, torment him, be indifferent, do anything but weep and look reproachful.

- Charlotte is too fine to go after a man in that way. She wants him to come to her, and accept her as she is.

- Too proud, she may be, smiled Mrs. Duke, but too fine to go after a man... no woman is ever that, if she loves. But some of us use our judgment about

such things.

- You say she is jealous, but I don't see whom she is jealous of. Mr. Plummer pays everybody attention.

- Well, isn't that enough? She wants him to pay attention only to her. There is one she might be jealous of, however, if she was not too stupid.

- Who is that? asked the Midshipman, consciously blushing.

- Sylvia Howard, of course. Don't you see how his eyes steady when he looks at her? That's the way to tell a man's feelings.

- I never see them together.

- Another good sign with older people. Years make us play the game more warily, my daughter.

- I think Charlotte is most jealous of you.

- That proves what a stupid observer she is. How such people can set up to be portrait painters, I can't imagine. A portrait painter must see beneath the skin.

- She thinks you are too familiar with him.

- Which I wouldn't be if I were fond of him of course.

- But you do like him, don't you, Mrs. Duke?

- He's a playful sort, But there isn't much in him that makes for endurance and daily wear. He's all right for a season's flirtation.

- Mr. Morgan and Mr. Quinn seem to like him.

- He's a man's man; and that is the best I can say of him. But he's not the man for a woman that either of the others are you mention.

- Why, on the hill, we always speak of Mr. Quinn

as the Misogynist!

- A name Captain Marion Cody invented; and it sounds very clever; but, like all of her epithets, it's a misnomer. There's another lady mistaken in her profession. She calls herself a novelist, an observer of human nature, and, like all people who think they are good at it, she is only a blind egotist, not capable even of observing her own motives.

- I don't think she'd like the idea of Mr. Plummer's being interested in Sylvia.

- She'd jump up and down and kick and scream, all together. Well, we're out for some exciting times this winter.

- Do you think Sylvia is interested in him?

- Dear child, every woman is interested in a man: especially in such a "he man" as Joe Plummer.

- You mean, he likes women very much?

- I mean he knows women, and depends on them for his pleasure. He doesn't like them as sincerely as Mr. Quinn does, or Mr. Morgan. At least, he isn't capable of liking one of them as long as they are. No, nor women collectively either.

- Perhaps that's the reason they like him.

- No doubt it works that way too. And then, he has to have them. They are as necessary to him as food.

- If they are necessary to him, he must like them.

- We love luxuries, my dear girl, not necessities. But Joe Plummer is a good sort, and I'm not going to say anything more against him or I'll suspect myself

of being in love with him like the rest.

. . . . . .

- Sylvia Howard, you are positively moping!... complained the novelist, laying down her pen.

- Cody, dear, I was thinking of Charlotte Gaylord. I have grown very fond of that girl, really.

- It's your compassion, Matey darling. It's your sympathetic nature. You would grow fond of the Man if he were in trouble.

- How do you know but what he is?... said Sylvia laughing somewhat rosily... I'm sure I would be in trouble if I had a swain pining so for me.

- He feeds on it, replied the other... Can't you see it? He's one of those that thrives on the starvation he causes. He's a Capitalist of Love - Say, that's not a bad phrase for my novel!

- I wish he'd feed on somebody else's starvation than Charlotte Gaylord's. She's altogether too fine a nature to be sacrificed.

- My dear, it is the fine natures that make the sacrifice worth while. Martyrs must be languishing, or they aren't worth the candle.

- Really, Cody, your metaphors are truly ecclesiastic!... but you're getting remote from the maritime, don't you think?

- Then, to quote the classic from our gallant old Commodore - You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.

- But is his omelette worth the eggs? He might use stale ones.

- Anybody's omelette is worth the best eggs he can procure. I mean to go in for egg-breaking, myself, someday. Our little Midshipman is putting us both to shame.

- You know, I think she's actually cracking the shell of the Misogynist? He spoke of her quite feelingly yesterday.

- The Misogynist finds safety in numbers. That doesn't quite carry out the egg-metaphor, does it?

- Put the eggs in a basket, and you are all right; though it does take us far from the seabord.

- The Chief Steward would find the trope suitable. But has Charlotte Gaylord been giving you confidences lately?

- I was in her room last night. It is very depressing. She isn't capable of thinking of anybody but that man. Why couldn't he have remained in Algeria?

- Or she have remained in Chicago? She knew he had a studio here.

- With her, it was only a desire to sentmentalize under the rose-tree after the flowers had flown away to other gardens.

- Come, come, Matey, you must keep your figures straight.

- I had to change this one to fit the situation. You can't say that Mr. Plummer was plucked, nor yet withered with the winter of old age.

- You might have said that the entire rose-tree

was transplanted, and Miss Gaylord came to tread on the sweetened soil that remained behind.

- Thank you, Cody, you can be literary, though you can't be genuine. But I hope you'll never be misprized like Charlotte.

- If I am, darling, I'll show you 'a woman scorned' in earnest. I'll tear up the whole garden and throw it into the sea.

- Do you know, I think it is this honey-moon landscape that is turning us into lunatics, and that Man is merely the humble medium through which it works.

- Don't shove off any lunacies on me. I am as sane as any sailor before the mast. But what did the Chief Engineer particularly confide?

- Oh, nothing in words. It was all in silence. But the tears actually flowed down her sad cheeks.

- And I doubt not, the pearls coursed down your cheery ones in sympathy. I will not have my Matey getting morbid.

- I confess to a few solitaires at times. But hers were cluster settings and braided garlands. It is pitiful when one woman ceases to conceal from another.

- Yes, we hate a woman till we get her to crying, and then we turn in and love her; that's human. Note that 'turn in' a nautical phrase.

- So, we opened our dead lights and shipped water till the decks had to be swabbed with our halyards.

- And you grappled your cross-trees and boarded. Charlotte isn't one of the kissing kind, I fancy.

- She's the kind that wants a man to do that. She is the ultra-feminine one of our officers.

- Did she ask for advice? Did you give it? But, pshaw! You never give advice.

- No: we just sat and held hands. But I think it comforted her, Cody, that I understood.

- Of course, it did, you silly little goosie. Do they have geese anywhere on board of a ship?

- I have heard of the sailors feathering their oars. No doubt a goose would come handy.

- For that, they pluck Mother Carey's chickens. But I think they use a goose wing for a sail.

- And goose flesh creeps up and down their backs, when they tell stories of haunted ships.

- We will now take our bearings, Matey, and set the helm. We're running before the wind in a way that's dangerous.

- Can you think of any advice to give her? I always come to my Captain for advice.

- Right, Matey, right and I always give it. Tell her to steer dead for Chicago.

- She has a notion she wants to punish him someway. She wants to put a knife in his back.

- His only vulnerable spot is his vanity. When he sees he is deserted, it will bleed him.

- But he has all of us left to stanch his wounds.

- Now, Matey, I must beg you to leave me out. Yes, also you can leave out yourself. Then, all he has left is our late passenger, who has used up all her lint on other defectives; and the purser fumbles all the ban-

dages, and the Chief Steward pours on vitriol and salt.

- The Midshipman is neat and handy with first aid.

- The Midshipman has greener wounds to handle. No: the engineer's stroke is to open the throttle and set sail for Chicago before the wind. I think I'll issue the order to her now.

- You'd better lie low, Cody, pleaded Sylvia.

But Captain Cody seized her speaking trumpet and went forward.

. . . . . .

The Engineer received her with some formality, and the speaking trumpet was tucked away in the Captain's pocket. Still, Marion Cody was not one to be balked in a project and she felt she was acting from a desire to be of service.

- You seem so unhappy here, she began after some generalities. Sylvia, in fact, has been telling me you are.

- I suppose nobody is very happy so far as that goes, said Charlotte slightly bristling, but we only confess the fact in moments of weakness.

- I'm sure I wish you would come over to our hut oftener. We might all cheer each other up a bit by sharing our misery.

- I have always lived very much alone, replied Charlotte somewhat mollified by this kindness. I imagine I would get irritated by even so sweet a character as

Sylvia, if I had her so much with me as you have.

- Oh I get irritated and act like a beast. But Sylvia overlooks it like an angel.

- She has a sweet nature, and I have become very fond of her. It's too bad she is coming under the charm of Mr. Plummer, he has a baleful influence on everybody. I sometimes almost believe in the evil eye.

- What do you mean? Mr. Plummer... Sylvia..! Captain Cody was aghast.

Now, the Engineer hardly knew if she meant anything; the words had slipped from her lips quite unpremeditated. She only knew that there was an enemy in her camp, and, like a good fighter, she had assumed the offensive. She was aware that an announcement of this nature, would throw the intruder on the defensive for her friend, and accordingly she had drawn the first weapon within reach.

- I don't mean, of course, that she is in love with the Man. Nobody can really be in love with him. He is too selffsh. Too coarse, I almost said. But it is plain that Sylvia has found him interesting. His very selfishness and coarseness attracts.

- But Sylvia is just getting over an affair of the heart. It is impossible that she could be getting interested, as you say.

- I believe the connoisseurs say that convalescence is the most dangerous period for new contagion.

- Oh, bosh! Sylvia never thinks of him.

No? I find she is always talking of him. Perhaps she feels instinctively you are hostile to such an inter-

est and never speaks of him to you.

- Oh, fiddle! She speaks of him to you because she thinks you are interested and she likes you.

- I have known Mr. Plummer so long that I could hardly be expected to be interested in the way you mean. There was a boy and girl intimacy between us, two years ago, but his is a nature that wearies of a game in two months. Also it wearies his partner. The game is too simple with him. One finds one's self in a very small circle.

- I don't imagine there is much subtlety about him. He's too damned handsome to have brains, that's a fact.

- Of course, some women can overlook the absence of brains.

- Not Sylvia. Oh, it can't be true what you say. I'm positive there's nothing in it, absolutely.

- Oh, I didn't mean to imply anything vital. If he was capable of inspiring a vital passion... it would be different.

- Well, I am surprised to hear all this from you. I thought you really...

- I may, of course, be wrong about Sylvia, the Engineer interrupted. I know Mr. Plummer is attracted to her. It was for that that I wanted to give her a word of warning.

- I thought he was occupied with Cecily Blount.

- He has his tricks: and one is employing decoys. Miss Blount is too eager, too forward. There is man enough in Joe Plummer to want to play the part of the

hunter.

- And Cecily Blount is a Diana with a big club, that's a fact.

- Of course, you understand that I don't mean to imply that dear Sylvia is in anyway conscious, either of his allurements, or of her susceptibility to them. I trust you for not mentioning this to her.

- You may. To hint it would set her on to the game. Sylvia is a contrary little person, though you wouldn't suspect it, would you?

- I imagine it is a weakness common to us all.

- I am cantrary, but I show it. Sylvia doesn't show it, but she is.

Charlotte had no observation to offer and Marion began pacing the floor restlessly. She had been turned from the original purpose of her visit, and all her thoughts were now centered on her chum. If it was true that Sylvia was becoming interested in this detestable man, would it not be better to keep Charlotte on the ground? Sylvia was too noble a creature to interfere and she had the conviction that Charlotte Gaylord was involved in an irrevocable passion. If Charlotte should go to Chicago, then it was natural that Sylvia would feel more free. Svlvia was a little sentimental... that was her weakness, and Mr. Plummer was no suitable match for her. The Captain intended she should marry some-day, but she meant to have a hand in the selection of a husband. Mr. Morgan, now, would be in every way more suitable. He had money and a literary appreciation, and Sylvia was just suited to

become an old man's darling. Neither was Mr. Morgan so old. If this artist could be but shipped to Chicago, instead. Or, maybe Charlotte Gaylord really cared for him... She turned on her suddenly with a question:

- Are you quite sure, Charlotte, - I hope you'll let me call you Charlotte... Sylvia does, and I would like you to call me Marion, - Are you quite sure that if Mr. Plummer should come around... I understand he is hopelessly in love with you...

- You mean that I might marry him?... queried Charlotte innocently, seeing that Miss Cody made pause.

- Why not? You are both artists; and I understand he makes a very reasonable living with his portraits.

- For that matter, I make a living myself. I should hardly marry any man for a living.

- Of course I was taking it for granted that you might have something of the old feeling of independence left. You would make him an ideal wife... a woman ought to understand her husband.

- And have nothing left for hero-worship?... questioned Charlotte.

- Don't you think it's safer to have the idols smashed? I mean safer for matrimony, in general?

- I don't see anything very safe in matrimony, any way you look at it, replied Charlotte. And it would be pleasanter to have a little romance in the undertaking, don't you think? Otherwise, it would be altogether too sordid.

- Viewed from any point, it's a fierce proposition. For my own part, I mean to take the conjugal vows in

the coldest blood. When I marry a man, I shall do it to manage him. And to manage a man, you've got to understand him. Heigh-ho! We women don't have a fair chance with the men.

- Why not do without them altogether? Is it so disgraceful to live an old maid?

- You have no position in society. Look at our two passengers for example. No; the Lord spare me from the fate of an old maid! Besides, a woman needs children... it's her nature.

- I can't think of Joe Plummer in the guise of a pater familias. He would have a bad influence on his sons.

- Oh, all sons go to the dogs. I mean to the women. It's as well to go early as late. I mean to bring up my sons to be regular rakes. It saves them from all sorts of calamities.

- Well, I can't think of having any sons at all. A daughter, now, I think I could handle a daughter. Even Mrs. Duke seems to do that not so badly,

- If she had a son she'd flirt with him at his thirteenth year. I'd like to see him tread on her heart.

The Chief Engineer laughed, but not maliciously, she could afford to be generous, for things were going well with her.

- Beatrice Knox should be here to stand up for Mrs. Duke, she said merely. The Midshipman is a daughty little champion.

- She's a dear all the same, and I like to see her stand up for her chums. I wish I had a John to fol-

low me like a dog.

- There are a good many things she could teach us, I imagine. The trouble is we're too old to learn new tricks.

- Now, you're making us the dog instead of John. Well, women are dogs; at least they lead a dog's life. But I won't go till you promise to call me Marion.

- I thought you liked Captain Cody better.

- That is all right for general usage; but you and I are to be friends, and... protect Sylvia.

- All right, Marion, laughed Charlotte, giving her hand generously.

- Captain Cody returned to her hut with many gloomy forebodings. She did not realize that she had been defeated, been out-generaled, and by one that she still regarded as her inferior.

Perhaps that is the greatest victory a general can have; to leave his victim unrecognizing he has been conquered. At all events, the Chief Engineer was satisfied for the moment. Time would tell if she had the character to endure success.

. . . . . .

There had been another party at Mrs. Duke's cottage, but Charlotte had pleaded 'indisposition' the last moment, and remained alone in the villa. As a matter of truth, she was not well, she was heartsick with disappointment and envy. Why should this brazen woman, she thought, who had no money nor social position,

who had been practically sent away from the place, have all the men and merriment and adulation, while she, who had been the sponsor for the whole company, should be regarded as little more than an upper servant? Everyone was more intimate with Joe than she was, even Mrs. Swan was beginning to speak of him with more familiar forbearance, and she, Charlotte, the only one who loved him, the only one who was capable of appreciating his artistic aims and his struggles, she, who had been his intimate chum and companion for three years, should find herself relegated to the background .. and that, too, when she was making such supreme sacrifice for him and turning from a good man's hand and fortune; the thing was unthinkable, unbearable. Its bitterness was cankering her tortured heart. That she, herself was to blame for this situation did not, in any way, give her solace or satisfaction. As she went over the details of the winter season, she could not, at any particular point, lay the blame on Joe or his conduct. He had always been thoughtfully polite toward her, where in former years he had often been thoughtless and rude. Also he had been sympathetic, even tender; but she didn't crave either sympathy or tenderness from him now; she wanted even domineering brutality. Yes, she admitted it to herself in all her pride of independence, she wanted to have this man flaunt his ownership of her in the faces of all these women. She wanted to walk proudly as his captive. Joe used to have that idea of matrimony... and even of all relationships with women. He wanted to be the master

toward the slave, and now that she was longing to enter servitude, he had taken on some of her old theories of feminine independence and was treating all these females as his equals. This irony of table-turning had impregnated her soul... she hardly knew where she was or what she was doing. She never knew the reason for her actions and she was becoming regardless of all consequences that might ensue. A famished jealousy was feeding at her vitals. It was gorging itself with bile of her spleen... but as the monster grew and swelled like a loathsome reptile, there seemed ever fresh food for its nourishment.

Sometimes she reasoned that Joe's conduct was but a trick to win her over. No: she replied, he had never been so cunning. Then her vanity came in for a claim that she had converted him. He acknowledged, now, woman's emancipation from masculine rule, and recognized them as intellectual equals and companions. But this theory gave her little comfort as it would have done even if it had been plausible, which it was not. Joe had no capacity for readjustment in his nature. He moved along on the prejudices of his youth. He would remain a conservative till his death, and secretly scorn the pretensions of all women.

As the hours of the lovely evening advanced, she found her thoughts all dwelling with the revellers. It was an informal costume ball, out on the porch, a few men had been invited from the club to furnish partners. There would be strolling on the beach at low tide, the guests had all been warned to bring galoshes.

The moon would be rising at midnight over the sea, and a late supper and various "high-jinks" had been planned. And, with which one would Joe be dancing? with which one strolling?.. He would hardly dare to keep up his flirtation with the Midshipman in this more formal function among strangers. Charlotte imagined all the women dancing with him. She had seen and even aided with some of the costumes. Sylvia was a wood- nymph, very beautiful; Marion was magnificent in Elizabethan court costume, with Letitia and the Midshipman as her pages. Cecily was a Medusa, very effective and very nude, but her costume was ingenious and in no way immodest. The Doctor had made an admirable Portia. Why had she not gone with them and improvised a costume? She could be as beautiful as any, more beautiful if she chose; she stood long gazing wistfully into her mirror.

She went to her trunk and took out some yards of white China-silk; with one or two cuts from that she could make a costume. It would not waste it. She could cut the lengths economically. Feverishly she sought her needle and her scissors.

In two hours time it was finished; she was standing before the glass in a rapture of excitement and success. She had made an oriental effect with a strait gown and a girdle of heavy beads. The difficult thing had been the head-dress. She had taken a yard of the silk and bound it with a runlet of gold beads, allowing the white draperies to fall at the back in simple folds and half concealing even her ears and her shoulders. Then,

her black hair had been drawn forward in hanging braids that were heavy with interbraided ribbons and strings of beads. Her dark eyes shone like lamps in this setting. She was the spirit of melancholy. It was wonderful. Fortunately, she had some strings of amber for her armlets, and yes, she would wear a black scarf in the beginning. White, black and gold! It rung like music, and she could toss aside the black scarf when she danced... or perhaps she should leave it hanging simply. It heightened the effect of her white arms!

Well satisfied, she turned from the mirror with a sigh. None of them was so tragically beautiful. She looked at the clock. Half past eleven. She could arrive perhaps for one dance... with Joe.

It was a half-hour's walk to the cottage. With tennis shoes she managed very well. She had gold paper points to cover them with when she arrived. She had arranged pins to hold them in their places.

Almost she was happy as she sped down the driveway, through the star-lit eucalyptus grove, in the silence, and, later on, in the open flower-scented twilight. The rising moon was tinging the sky over the sea. There was some unnaccountable hint of dawn in the milky way.

Along the dusty, sandy road that led down to the sea, her spirits became more irritated and troubled. It had been a foolish undertaking, after all, to attempt this long way in so fragile a costume. Several times her scarf caught on a way-side bramble and the sand silted into her shoes and hurt her feet, and she had to sit

down often to remove and empty them. Once, in rising impatiently, she tore her skirt. The silk did not yield but the thread had broken, and a long rip in the seam threatened further disaster. When she came within hearing distance of the cottage, she stopped to listen. Then she realized that she was crying softly. Her eyes might be swollen or red. If she should go in without a preliminary glance in a mirror... it would not do... she might look like a fright,

The mechanical piano-player was droning out a waltz, but there was little sound of feet or swish of dancers. Probably the guests were weary. She could dance with Joe. He was never tired at the end, though at the beginning of a ball he had no energy or fervor. She would steal up to a window, the shutters were closed of one; she could peer through between the slats and they would not see her. At the end of the house there was no piazza. It was deep shaded by luxuriant pepper trees. But the window was too high. She must find something to stand on. It seemed there were no people on the veranda, probably they had gone out on the beach to see the moon-rise. Some were still dancing however. Perhaps Joe and the Midshipman. Charlotte dragged up a light settee beneath the window, and her girdle caught in its slats and was quite torn off, the heavy beads scattering in the grass. But she was oblivious of little accidents now. She climbed on the bench, holding on to the shutter... the bench was tippy... who was it dancing with Joe?

It was Sylvia. There was no one else dancing now

in the room. They had wound up the piano-player, put in a Strauss and were having an old-fashioned spin all alone.

And how beautiful was Sylvia the wood-nymph, eyes shining, cheeks flushed, hair disordered... and her head was so close to his breast!

It was a gallant breast, too, in a Robin Hood costume, and there was a manly look of love on his face that was worthy of the hero he impersonated.

Joe and Sylvia! The Chief Engineer had meant to tease the Captain and, the falsehood she had created was becoming reality. Even now Marion Cody's voice was laughing out on the beach.

- Sylvia, come out! it kept calling.

Charlotte did not wait to see if Sylvia responded. She had no thought, nor even curiosity about them now. Strangely enough her jealousy had left her. She only realized that she was crying and alone...

CHAPTER VII

The Mate

- Cody, did you know that the Misogynist was a Mormon? He was telling me all about it yesterday at the picnic.

- How many wives?... asked Marion, turning lazily from her book on the window sill.

- I mean really. He was born of Mormon parents. His mother was the fifth wife. He was her third child.

- That would hardly permit his being the seventh son, so there's no luck; or, maybe he's the seventy-seventh.

- You will joke; but I am in earnest. Mr. Quinn is really born a Mormon.

- Matey, you were drinking claret. 'Tis a deceptive fluid, especially before the setting of the sun.

- You are positively provoking, today. Go back to your book. I have finished.

Captain Cody rose to an astonished sitting posture.

- Do you actually declare you're not feeding me plum duff?... she demanded with wide-open eyes.

- It's pure Gospel hard-tack: that's a fact. He was surprised that we didn't all know it.

- Then how comes he friends with Mr. Morgan?

- I suppose a Mormon can be an apostate the same as anyone, can't he? But Mr. Quinn lived with the Mormons till he was twenty, and then he went East to study at Yale.

- And does his father still go on having wives?

- His father and mother are both dead. They were massacred by the Apaches in Mexico. It seems the family had to leave the United States and they took up pioneer life in Chihuahua.

- I must interview him and put him in my novel. A Mormon would spice it up. It's getting stodgy.

- A little off-color, don't you think?... unless you make him horribly immoral?

- Mormons are immoral. I shall only stick to the facts.

- But Mr. Quinn is not immoral, is he?

- Isn't it the ne-plus-ultra of immorality to be a Misogynist?... especially for a Mormon?... A mormon bachelor?

- But he's an apostate. Besides, he may marry. He isn't altogether too old.

- He's thirty six, my dear. That's late to begin marrying seven wives.

- His father had only five altogether.

- Seven, if a Divine Providence in the guise of

Apaches had not interrupted his abominations.

- Mr. Quinn says his mother and sisters led a beautiful life in Salt Lake City. One of his sisters studied music and one was a painter. He, himself, became an amateur collector of steel-engravings.

- Did the sisters go to Mexico and get killed?

- No: one is married to a Gentile in Omaha... that's the musical one; the other is unmarried.

- Not typical... They won't do for my novel. I must have them both second wives, at least.

- But his mother was a fifth wife, and that's interesting. In Salt Lake City, each wife had a separate house; but in Mexico they all lived together.

- Scandalous! I hope you blushed when he told you of it.

- He visited them there when he was a senior in Yale. He says he never saw a happier family. There were thirty nine children in all. Of course, some of them were married themselves. It made quite a colony but they all ate and worked together, only separate, private apartments for each mother.

- Sylvia, I am actually feeling squeamish.

- His father was like a patriarch among them. He must have been a man of unusual individuality... He was a student of Hebrew, and read Sanscrit.

- Matey, you are making this up.

- I am not. And I think you're perfectly horrid this morning. I think Mr. Quinn is a very nice man.

- So do I, my dear, and I have been nasty, forgive me. But I was shocked. I still am. I confess it. Now

if you'd told me Mr, Plummer was a Mormon, I could have well believed it... but the Misogynist!... Well, well, we live and un-learn. - But I do wish I could put him in my novel.

- Publishers wouldn't stand for it, Cody. 'Twould hurt their sales with all the moral people... the wife of the bank-clerk in Oshkosh, you know.

- The men might buy the book and read it on the sly, Marion suggested meditatively. I'd love to write a book just for men.

- Bernard Shaw says it's the men who are opposed to polygamy... The attractive man would get all the wives.

- Even if the men are opposed to it, they like to think of it. Every man secretly thinks he is attractive.

- Then they ought to be for it; and, for my part, I think Bernard Shaw is wrong. He is always straining himself to be different.

- Does Mr. Quinn believe in polygamy?

- He maintains all men do in secret; and in secret they practice it, he says. His theory is that men are ruled by women... Gentile men, that is; he says they have been subjugated by their mothers, then their wives take control and then their daughters... so all through their careers they are forced to lead double lives..

- Hypocrites! Does he actually admit it?

- He says all men have a double standard of sex ethics. A public one which is displayed on all occasions to placate the women... and a private one that they act on but forswear, even with their male com-

panions and friends.

- The brutes!

- He says some brutes are monogamous like the bears, and others are polygamous like the stag. With either sort, he thinks it would be immoral for one of the individuals to act against the nature of the species. And the men species is naturally polygamous.

- Then all men are immoral. I agree with him. But what about the women? What are they?

- They, too, he claims are polyandrous.

- Well, they are... but being a woman, I deny it.

- He says we all do, and we must.

- Why?

- Because the men wouldn't like us to break down their public code of ethics. They insist that we shall play the game as they have invented it.

- But he says women rule.

- It is a part of man's game that they shall rule. And he makes the women think they do it of their own accord.

- The beast!

- He was very gentlemanly about it.

- A beastly gentleman! You stick to Mr. Plummer.

- I'm not stuck to anybody Cody... reproachfully.

- All women are sticking to something. Is it not written: Cleave to that which is good.

- And you're making out Mr. Plummer is good?

- He's certainly good to look at. He's damned handsome. The Misogynist looks like an old maid.

- His features are delicate, but he has a beard.

- He wears it to cover up his femininity. Sylvia Howard, I warn you against the Misogynist... A Mormon! Well, I suspected it all along!

- He doesn't make love, exactly, do you think?

- He does worse. He get's all the women's confidences. I blush to think of the secrets I've told him, myself. And he never tells a thing... the sly dog! Oh, I hate him! I knew he was abnormal!

- A product of Mormanistic perversion?

- Matey, darling, you ought to write psychology. You could invent terms that would pound old Freud to a jelly.

- Well, I'm glad he's a Mormon!... settled Sylvia. I've always wanted to know one, but I've hesitated for fear that I might not like one of his wives.

. . . . . .

Sylvia did not dismiss the subject of the Misogynist as easily as Marion had proposed she should do. There were many angles from which one might regard Mr. Quinn and find him worthy of study, if not of passion. He seemed to be great friends with Mr. Plummer, which alone would give him justifiable interest. Also, he was friends with Mr. Morgan. The three men seemed to have a mutual understanding that allowed them all intimacy and independence. It was as if they had a secret compact to trust one another: they were not suspicious, nor even inquisitive; they merely smiled.

What Marion had said about giving confidences to

the Misogynist, Sylvia had experienced, as well. She had wondered sometimes if he passed these confidences on to the other men. She decided that he did not; or, if he did, it would be in a guarded way that would shield all delicacy. She was willing to trust her reputation in his hands.

For she had to talk to somebody about Joseph Plummer, Giuseppe, as she sometimes thought of him in secret. She found it necessary to express her admiration for his manly frankness, for his brook-like laughter, for his antics of a colt. He could be tender, too, but that she did not speak of. It was not fitting that his friend should think him tender.

Mr. Plummer was begging her to sit for her portrait, and she had made up her mind to do it on the instant of his asking, but she had not given yet her assent, because why?.. because she could not break the news to Marion.

She had talked to the Misogynist about it and he had agreed that women's friendships were apt to be tyrannical. Men friendships were, too, sometimes, when the men were young, but the women grew worse as they grew older whereas men became more tolerant with years.

Sylvia had suggested that women's affections were grounded deeper, but the Misogynist had thought the contrary and had argued for it.

- It is the shallow water that is ruffled by the pebbles, he said; the old proverb that still waters lie deep was a true one.

- You think men are not jealous like the women?.. she had asked.

- Often-times they are as jealous, no doubt; but their philosophy, or is it their affection, permits them to see around the jealousy and behind it. In their first loves, the males are profoundly jealous, but later on in life, most of the masculine jealousy is kept up by the conventional sense of honor, which is a product of education and not emotion.

It was difficult to think of the Misogynist as being jealous, certainly, but it was also difficult to think of his being in love. With Giuseppe it was also difficult to imagine, but that was because of quite another reason... he would never have occasion for the passion as the women were always in love with him.

But, as Sylvia considered, she did not think that she would be capable of the ignoble passion any longer, herself; and she was the most feminine of women. She had put this observation to Mr. Quinn, and a strong light of satisfaction had extended over his countenance as he was convinced that her statement was true. He even admitted that he might be mistaken in his conclusions concerning the sexes. He hoped he was. It gave him contentment to think so. As he thought of the Mormon life as he had known it in his early years, he could not remember a case where one wife had been jealous of another; whereas, on the contrary, he had known cases among the men. Perhaps it was the restrictions forced upon the woman in a monogamous society that brought out jealousy. After all, tyranny is

the source of all base passions. It is not natural for a woman to monopolize a man, and being placed in a society where she may do so, she immediately becomes vicious and destructive.

- But don't you think a woman may be attracted by more than one man? Sylvia had stood up for feminine perquisites.

- Oh, certainly. A normal woman is attracted by all men who are also normal; but in a polygamous society, there is so little opportunity to have a suggestion toward that attraction; and women more readily accept and hold established customs.

Sylvia had asked him if he preferred the polygamous marriage, and he had smiled and reflected for some moments... 'If I did', he had finally replied, 'I might have remained among my people. But I did not. It is unnatural for a group of individuals, a sect, to live contrary to the spirit of their period. In my apostasy, I may not even marry at all. That would be the resultant swinging of the pendulum.'

'Perhaps a Mormon does not really love', Sylvia had suggested. To which he had replied that he did not think they did love like the Gentiles. They were instructed to give their love to the Church.

'And do they do that?' she had asked in curiosity.

'At least, their affection is so distributed over women, children, friends and occupation, that it is thinned in the process', he had replied.

When she had quoted Marion... that 'Mr. Plummer should be a Mormon', the Misogynist had merely

shook his head and smiled... 'Miss Cody will never understand the Mormons, nor Mr. Plummer, and, perhaps, she will never understand herself.'

Indeed, as Sylvia observed her friend through those months, she came to doubt more and more the infallibility of her judgment, that she had formerly accepted without question. That Marion was clever, she still insisted; but there is such a thing as being too clever, of letting one's cleverness run away with one. A desire for the epigrammatic often leads an enthusiast far from the truth. It sounds well to hit off a character in a few words; the trick is prevalent in all our modern literature. But the fact still remains, none the less, that a character cannot be hit off in a few words. It is too complicated a product of heredity and environment to be reduced to congenital impulses and emotions.

Sylvia had lived intimately with Marion now for three years. She had been rescued by her from the entanglements of a first love-affair. She would always feel grateful to Marion for that, for the thing was getting altogether sordid and disgusting, and she had not the courage or the energy to tell her persecutor to go, though she had grown utterly weary of his advances. Sylvia had not had a fair start with him, coming as she did from a home of refinement and somewhat Puritanical New England surroundings. A graduate of one of the well-known girl's colleges, she had taken her first situation, she then called it, in a new Boston publishing house just established, consisting of three enthusiastic young modernists and free thinkers, who

spelled literature and life with big letters, not stopping even with the capital initials but insisting on the capitals all through. All this had coincided with her own school-girl enthusiasm. She thought they were geniuses all three; one of them was married, one divorced, and the other scorned both divorce and marriage but not women. It was this one who began to pay court to Sylvia, who was engaged as a reader for the house.

Free love theories have a fascination for the ignorant that they cease to maintain for the instructed. Sylvia had listened, considered, been tempted; but her early associations and training had held her firm. In time, when the insistence of her admirer had become somewhat crass, she had one day been discovered in tears by one of their novelists, Marion Cody, masculine lady from Kentucky in fact, who had summarily taken the girl under her protection and told the publisher where he " got off" as she expressed it. Even though it had cost her a contract with this enthusiastic and rashly enterprising firm. Marion had carried her protegée off to New-York and the two had set up as bachelor maids, taking newspaper work or whatever offered them a living in the writing line, and indeed had come on very well.

It was in the second year of their living together that they had met Ernest Swinnerton, the reformer. Marion had first flirted with him and found him harmless, broken his heart, as he averred in deep melancholy, and then turned him over to Sylvia, who was comforter and sympathyzing friend.

To be the confidante of a man's soul in trouble has also an attraction for young women and in due time Sylvia found herself again in love, but this time with a maternal affection that often proves more fatal to its possessor than a passion for a professor of free love. Fortunately or unfortunately for Sylvia, this hero had proved to be a puritan without reproach, and while he would share his inmost soul with a woman, his body was reserved for legal rites. He was poor, there were family reasons that he should not marry. His mother was a semi-invalid, who doted on him; there was a taint of insanity in the blood so she maintained, and Sylvia had been martyrized once more to selfish gods. Once again Marion Cody had interfered, had a quarrel with the mother and her priest son and the two girls had come to California for the winter, supported by the royalties of Marion's novel, which was proving a good seller and going well, making it necessary that she should have a second done by spring. Ernest Swinnerton was still writing, still pouring out his soul, but the letters were becoming rarer as the winter advanced, and Marion suspected that he was finding another female and getting comfort that three thousand miles seemed to curtail. So much for Sylvia's romance up to the present, when 'The Man' was thrust under her nose.

Sylvia admitted from the first that she was drawn to him. There was such a dawning wonderment in his eyes. Morever he was handsome and he was strong. Two characteristics that had been denied both the

others. Bainbridge Leman, the first, had been swart and nervous, a hook nose, scanty lip, a pointed chin. His power had lain in a pair of piercing eyes, black and given to opalescent milky flashes. Also he had a shock of black curling hair... but no: she had to admit he was not handsome. Ernest Swinnerton, on the contrary, had been blonde, inclined to baldness at the early age of thirty seven. He had an ungainly figure, tall and spare, and an extenuation of side face that was not prepossessing. Bainbridge had possessed a well-knit figure, though too delicate. Swinnerton gave the impression of being double jointed. His soul had been his asset, and his earnestness. He could talk about his problems for weeks together. The Man here, all glowing with radiant health, seemed neither to have theories nor problems. He had admiration for pretty Sylvia in his courtesy. Yes, she could voluptuously learn to love him.

But Marion Cody had other plans for her partner, that did not tend toward the groves of voluptuous love. Sylvia should be married, she would see to it. It was necessary that Marion get her well established. For herself she had a reserve back in Kentucky, a well estated bachelor who adored her, and as she looked forward someday to being Mrs. Lindsay Wellington, she also looked to visiting her friend likewise well established; why not Mrs. Alexander Morgan, as well as any? He was a widower, but that would serve to keep him steady. Marion had met Mr. Morgan in New York shortly after the death of his wife, for that reason she

also often become servants of the rich, so that this democracy did not in any way seem incongrous to her. She knew that many of the Spanish families, who now made up the stable service of the fashionable families, could boast of a lineage far superior to their employers, and to her mind family antiquity was much more important than money or position in society. She liked her Giuseppe all the better when she realized that he was of old California stock and traced backward through Ohio to Connecticut and the New Haven Colony of early date.

She did experience a shock one day when she learned through Marion Cody that he had attended a Spanish ball, given in honor of the servants of the wealthy families. But when Carlos explained to her that the ball had been gotten up by himself and his brothers, it seemed natural that Giuseppe should attend. He would not wish to hurt his former play-fellow's feelings by refusing to come to his party. That he had danced with any of the servants, she would not believe: but her father had met something of the same problems in New Hampshire and she had admired him for remaining true to his childhood associates. Marion Cody from Kentucky felt differently about it. But in Kentucky the servants had been negroes.

An intruder in the studio that did annoy Sylvia, however, was Cecily Blount though she never came in to the garden. Mr. Plummer always met her and turned her back, asked her to wait in the studio or come later. He had an easy way of turning people off when he did

not wish to be interrupted.... But why should Cecily Blount make so free with his studio, merely when she had her portrait painted there? It was true that she did not come often and that she used the pretext of an errand: a forgotten drapery, some photographs she had borrowed, or, consultation on some change in a a dance she was creating. It was plain that she was not invited. None of the denizens of the villa were, nor did they come. Charlotte Gaylord, who had much the better right, had only made one formal visit at the studio, and that in the company of the Midshipman. Sylvia had heard of Mrs. Duke's calling sometimes, but even that did not annoy her like the presumption of Cecily Blount. The dancer had an air of being at home, and though this was not encouraged by the host, it was not either resented as it should be.

As Sylvia thought it out to herself, she decided that Giuseppi lacked the domestic instinct. People in his house were no more to him than people in the street. If they did not interfere with his work, he did not notice them. If they did, he said good-morning pleasantly, and dismissed them. How easily, how impersonally, he lived! And yet, how all his charm was his personality! He was a product of the California sun and the sea; the soil that is always bathed in summer, and knows naught of winter's frost, or snows, or storms. His presence reflected sunshine, warm and golden... He was not created for stormy passions or gloomy thoughts. Gradually Sylvia came to think he was not created for matrimony, though she realized

and he would say, too, that she had a splendid chance. Sylvia guessed it was the Mysogynist at once, and she began to blame him, just a little. He would make a capital husband for Charlotte: he had money, and... Well, what the Misogynist lacked was initiative: a virtue in a husband, but in a lover... Sylvia would have to help the thing along.

It would be pleasant, she told herself, to have Charlotte for a companion. They might travel in Europe; they looked well together; and, one advantage, Charlotte would have no opportunity to become jealous; the Mysogynist was quite harmless, and would never waver. As for Sylvia's being jealous about Giuseppi, well... not of Charlotte... she did not think so, not if Giuseppe behaved himself. He would behave himself with Mrs. Quinn, that was certain. He had great respect for the honor of his friend.

Sylvia realized that she was leaving Marion out of this picture. She sighed for it, but she could not crowd her in. There was Mr. Morgan, unmated, and still marriageable, and it was difficult to think of the other men without him. He would go well, too, with the travelling in Europe. He would be a balance-wheel to the party, give it presence; but Marion was a false note either as Mrs. Morgan or as Miss Cody, or Mrs. Anybody-else. She did talk with the Man about Marion Cody, merely tentatively, in an impersonal way. She could see he was not easy in his mind about her, though he praised her for the brilliancy of her wit.

'But you should get away from her,' he added...

She overbarks you where you are really the most clever.

It seemed that Giuseppi had no money, and he gave this as his reason for not entertaining the idea of marriage.

'Quinn and Mr. Morgan can settle down', he had once remarked, 'but I must not marry till I've made my fortune.' At another time, he had told her that he was too lazy to make a fortune, and this she could very well believe. She knew already of his having turned away two portrait orders, well-paying ones, Miss Reamer and Miss Clarke. 'They're not interesting', he had explained to her seriously, 'besides I have spending-money to last me three more months. I was painting a fake countess in Algeria. Gee, but she was a corker!... and some bird.

Sylvia hardly knew whether to find more fault with the 'corker', or the 'bird'. She began to realize that, as a future husband, a portrait-painter might be difficult.

At times, she discarded all ideas of marriage, and dreampt of an exquisite affair of love. This matter she could not discuss with Giuseppi, but it became a frequent topic of conversation with Mr. Quinn. The Misogynist had a fairly complete set of views on that subject. They talked it over at the tennis court while they were resting. Both of them were devoted to singles, and they chose an hour when the others were at siesta.

Love, or, rather, a love-affair, the Misogynist had expatiated, was something like a hybrid rose. It should

pass through all the stages: it should sprout, flourish, flower, and then be allowed to die. He did not connect the idea with marriage; that belonged to the more natural, the fruiting varieties of flowers. A love-affair might come before a marriage, or after, but in any case it should not be interfered with. It would die of its own passion in due time and the victims should be cherished protected... Yes, on this point the Misogynist was quite certain. If a husband, for instance, saw his wife, the mother of his children, falling in love, it was his duty to shelter the growth, not deny it. As a husband he should protect his wife from public scorn, from the lover she needed no protection. The affair should be left to take its own course and in the end the wife would return to her family. And she would be richer for the experience, he maintained; in fact Sylvia was altogether shocked and breathless. Captain Cody said she was playing tennis too hard.

- And should a wife give her husband the same liberties? Sylvia had gasped... it was impossible to blush before the Misogynist.

- The normal husband takes them on the sly. It is not a question of so much importance, said Mr. Quinn.

- You mean to say that Americans... Sylvia could get no further in her amazement.

- I am not speaking of milk-sops, said Mr. Quinn calmly. I mean just normal, average men.

- I can't agree with you, said Sylvia.

- Don't misunderstand or misread my statistics. The average normal American husband doesn't have

love affairs, I grant you. He is too prosaic, too unimaginative, too old; for the average American stops growing when he marries. What I say is that when the normal American does have youth enough left in him to fall in love with a woman after he is married, he does have an affair on the sly.

- Do you think when Mr. Plummer, for instance, marries, he will prove himself an average normal American and stop growing? Sylvia was indiscreet with the Misogynist; all women were: they felt that they could trust him.

- Mr. Quinn had hedged on this, and had considered. He evidently did not like to lay bare the personal weaknesses of his friends...

'Plum is hardly the average normal American... though he might be that, too. It is probable that he will never marry. - No: he probably will.'

Whereupon, Miss Howard had laughed, and told Mr. Quinn that in generalization he was amazing, but in concrete instances he was utterly commonplace.

The Misogynist had a stammering, timid way of being apologetic that was both pitiful and pleasurable to see.

. . . . . .

Charlotte Gaylord made a gay story of her night's adventures in the dining-room the next day at the lunch hour. She had a way of not sparing herself in such descriptions, and could appreciate the ludicrous nature

of her misfortunes, and vividly reproduce the whole tragedy, touched with the comic that surrounds all tragedy. At such times, she surpassed Marion Cody, herself. She dwelt upon the most touching points with genuine merriment: the sand in her shoes, the tearing of the white China silk, the breaking of the girdle and consequent loss of all the beads, the tippy settee on which she stood to peer through the shutter; but she did not describe the expression on Sylvia's face as she had floated about the room in the arms of Mr. Plummer. Sylvia wondered if she had had any expression, and went to Charlotte's room, afterwards, for a chat, hoping she could find out in some fashion. Anyway, she wanted to consult her about the sitting for her portrait, for it was not Sylvia's nature to do anything under-handed. She valued Charlotte's friendship too much for that.

- Mr. Plummer wants me to pose for him, she began frankly. It seems, he has finished with Miss Blount.

- You are beautiful, I thought he would ask you, replied Charlotte. I have often wanted to ask you to sit for me. But I am not a famous painter, like Joe Plummer.

- Is he so famous, then? I have never heard his name in New York.

- He is not so famous as he deserves to be; nor, as I hope, he will be, if he keeps on. He lacks worldly ambition, which is a pity. He ought to be painting now in a city studio instead of philandering about in a California climate.

- You know, I would love to sit for you at any time. I've never been painted. I'd like to try it.

- Well, begin with him. You'll find it interesting. Sometime, when I'm in shape, I'll ask you, too.

- Aren't you in shape now?

- I'm all unsettled in my life... I have so many things to consider.

- It might settle you to have a steady task.

- No: I wouldn't do it justice. And you deserve justice. Could you keep a secret, if I told you?... not tell even Marion, or anybody?

- Of course I could.

- Mr. Morgan has asked me to marry him.

- Mr. Morgan! I thought it was Mr. Quinn.

- What made you think of him? Has he ever said anything?

- No: I only thought he might be looking about for somebody. You can never trust a misogynist, you know.

- It's all nonsense about his being a misogynist. That's one of Marion's literary fabrications. He likes all women. That's his failing. He is as much a Mormon as he was when he was born.

- I never knew he was born a Mormon till the other day.

- No? I knew it before I ever met him. Mr. Morgan told me of him in Chicago.

- Perhaps that was the reason I thought you might be interested in Mr. Quinn... Because you never speak of him, and yet seem to be such friends.

- He's friends with everybody, smiled Charlotte.

- And are you considering Mr. Morgan? You really ought to. Criminy!... but marriage is something fierce to conider!

- Do you think a woman should consider marriage when she does not love?... or at least, loves somebody?

- I would consider it... but not do it, said Sylvia gravely.

- I wish I could do it without considering. I am so tired of fighting my battles. They don't seem to amount to anything even if I win. The spoils of victory are so easily spoiled.

Sylvia was inwardly readjusting her dream-pictures of married travelling-companions in Europe. It would be sad to leave the Misogynist out. Would it be possible to couple him with Marion?

- Do you think Marion would make a good wife?.. she launched abruptly.

- I should like to see her two years married to Joe Plummer. He wouldn'd be strutting around so chesty as he is now.

- Do you think we'd like him plucked of all his feathers?

- I'd enjoy having him for a time where I didn't like him. He's actually making eyes at Beatrice Knox.

- The Midshipman has a crystal casing to her heart I think.

- I envy her. She does right to choose a boy. The ideal thing would be to go through life alone, but we seem to be built to want attention.

- Mr. Morgan would never fail in that direction.

- No: that's the difficulty. He's too good for a husband. A woman needs someone she can scold.

- I've quarrelled with two men; I'm tired of it.

- They weren't husbands. They were free to run away.

- It would be awful to have somebody who couldn't.

- It would be delightful, dear; it's the one joy of marriage.

- You are as cynical as Marion on the marriage question. Now, I go about thinking honey would drip from our finger-tips. Get your portrait painted, and you'll have a different opinion about it.

- Do you really advise me to do it? I'm afraid of Marion.

- It's an experience worth having. So is the picture; or, it will be. He will do you a masterpiece.

- Yes?

- I'll settle with Marion, if she gets on her high horse. But not a hint to her, or anybody, about Mr. Morgan.

- Poor Marion! I think she intended him for me. She thinks she's opaque, but she's transparent as a bubble.

- I don't want to stand in the way of the Captain, laughed Charlotte.

- After all, it's the Chief Engineer who really runs the ship, chimed in Sylvia. As a figure-head, Captain Cody is a great success. Why don't you come down to the studio and paint me at the same time I am sitting

for Mr. Plummer?

- We've tried that in the old days, and it didn't work. It would work even less now. No: go alone.

- I have thought of Marion as a chaperone; but Mr. Plummer doesn't want her.

- He's right, there, if only for the picture's sake. Besides, chaperones are out of date in painter's studios.

- As they are everywhere in the modern world, said Sylvia, rising to go. Only fashionables live now in the nineteenth century.

She carried her dreams into the garden.

- So it's Mr. Morgan, Giuseppe wants her to marry... I believe he really loves her too. But he knows she should have money and position. There is something almost noble about Giuseppe. I wonder if the Misogynist has money?

. . . . . .

Marion had made less objectiones than Sylvia had anticipated to the announcement of the arrangement for the portrait. A tightening of the lips, a snap of the black eyes and the remark that she hoped that the picture would turn out successful, was all the Captain had voushsafed at the moment. Perhaps the quiet way in which Sylvia had made the statement had something to do with its reception. She had not asked for advice on the matter, not even as to the frock she should wear. Also Marion was getting worried about her novel which had been sadly neglected for all the company. Every

day there had been something in the way of an excursion or a party for the afternoon or evening... and morning given to work after such excitements are apt to be wasted in retrospection. Especially if there is a a companion in the next room bursting with details of remenbered conversations. People have to be discussed and analysed, motives established, past constructions re-ad justed and general gossip attended to, along with arrangements for coming events. Marion talked laughingly of going back to New York to get a rest; this constant round of gayeties was overpowering her; Sylvia had suggested that if she had the hut all to herself in the morning, as she would do while Sylvia was at her sittings, the novel would probably go on better... at least it would go on, whereas before it had seemed stalled altogether. If there was a slight reserve growing up between the friends at the same time, Sylvia comforted herself that it could easily be broken down when the portrait was completed and the artist had passed out of her life. She kept telling herself resolutely that he would pass out, that she wanted him to do so, but underneath she had a hope that he would not, though in what relation he should remain she did not know. He was so satisfying, so companionable, so golden... that her happiness was a treasure she would not lose. She was experiencing all the joys of being loved without any of the repugnance from physical surrender. There she sat on a stone bench, under an olive tree, for so he had decided to paint her out of doors. There were sprays of sweet alyssum in her lap and her eyes were left to

dwell on a fountain, with a pensiveness of unrecognized pleasure. She took an unconscious delight in the thought that the man's gaze was playing over her features... like the sunlight. If sometimes she caught the glance ardent even piercing, there was an impersonality in it that kept her from embarassement. If he possessed her it was but as a proposition of light and color, and she was contented to let him have his whole will. Sometimes he talked to her quietly, often he encouraged her chatter, he never argued, never objected, never urged. He too, seemed saturated with contentment, expressed by the olive tree and the carved bench and the fountain... For in the back-ground was the blue sea untroubled like a plaque of solid turquoise beneath the sky.

As she romanticised, this seemed to her like happy marriage. So two souls might dwell in a paradise of bliss. Always the Man was thinking of her; she filled his thoughts; she was the embodiment of his visions, his aspirations. In working for himself he was using her, and even her white dress was a thing for him to worship. How different from those other men who had loved her, or had loved themselves perhaps in her sympathy. The first, dark, nervous, insistent, penetrative; the second, pouring out the anguish flood of his soul to her. The Man was satisfied with the pleasance of her countenance; himself he could liberate on his canvas. He did not crowd her with his ego, he took her as he saw her merely into his own soul, and after mingling her with himself and his knowledge he gave her forth

transmuted into light.

Those were long, happy mornings like placid poems, she wished that they might never have an end.

The Misogynist came sometimes to chat and linger: his was the only presence the painter would endure. Mr. Quinn would come up early to lunch at the studio. He loved to cook and make household service about the place. He looked at the picture in its progress in an affectionate rather than in a critical way. He had the attitude of a gentle priest officiating at a marriage. He accepted the fact of Sylvia's gift to the painter, and seemed to confer on it the benediction of his approval. In return she liked to show him that she was happy. That the olive tree and the fountain were in her heart. He never sat, he never loitered in the work hour, but he came and went like some breeze up from the sea. It was plain to see that his presence soothed the artist or left him at least untroubled as it had found him. Sylvia reflected that there seemed to be an understanding between the two men that she had never before observed between two women. Even between husband and wife she had not seen it, except at short intervals of time. It was not love so much as it was trust and acceptance. She wondered if their past had always been so quiet.

Those were long, sunny mornings beneath the olive tree and the blue of the summer sea was far away.

. . . . . .

But if Captain Cody seemed indifferent to the fate of

her first officer, the Chief Steward made it up in solicitude. Letitia had a keen noes for a bit of scandal, or romance as she more poetically chose to call it.

- If you don't watch you will find your nose out of joint, she said on the day of the first sitting to Cecily Blount who was teaching the Midshipman to smoke, after weeks of persuasion for the undertaking of the adventure,

Cecily laughed and took hold of the organ mentioned.

- It might add to my beauty!.. was all she said.

- I don't see why you should make so much of a portrait being painted, tossed the Midshipman. Mr. Plummer has made several sketches of me.

- You sly little puss! exclaimed Letitia, and you have not shown me a single one of them.

- He didn't give them to me of course. He didn't give Cecily her portrait, do you suppose?

- That's different. He has painted it for exhibition.

- Well, mine weren't, but I don't attach any importance to his keeping them. John and Ben have drawn me a dozen times.

- John and Ben are students, replied Letitia. When an older man paints a portrait he has his reasons.

- I'm sure the reasons are justifiable what ever they are. I find Mr. Plummer a perfect gentleman. though I insist I shall marry Mr. Quinn.

- Cecily keeps her own counsel, I notice, Letitia tried shrewdly to draw her out.

- You made a mistake when you stopped at one

husband. If you'd had three, you wouldn't attach so much importance to the first.

- What do you mean? the Chief Steward was bristling.

- Why a man is only one man after all. There are a lot more in the sea... to speak of fishes.

- You mean you are tired of Mr. Plummer.. Plummer! what a horrid name!

- Why, no: I'm not tired of him. I like him. But Mr. Morgan interests me now. I had cast my eye on the Misogynist but since Beatrice had made her claims, I yield him to her.

- Mr. Morgan will never marry again, announced the poetess. He remains true to the memories of a happy marriage.

- I thought according to you no marriage was happy.

- When one of the parties is dead, Letitia makes an exception, sputtered Beatrice who had just burned her tongue.

- Death does heal many wounds, Letitia admitted. I could have forgiven Mr. Swan if he had died.

- For my part, if a first marriage has been happy, drawled Cecily, I should think it a reason for undertaking another. Just as if one love affair had been successful, the parties should be looking out for another to carry on.

-Now, I think Sylvia Howard's way of reasoning more justifiable, put in the Midshipman. When two love affairs have turned out unsatisfactory to hope for better luck in a third.

- Is that what she said? asked Letitia eagerly.

- Of course, not. Sylvia is too refined to say or think such a thing. It was Marion Cody who put the put the words in my mouth.

- I think Captain Cody is jealous.

- What does she care for Mr. Plummer? She will choose a man with an aristocratic name.

- What a fuss about a name! crooned Cecily musically. A wife doesn't call her husband by his last name. Call him Josey.

- I always called my husband Mr. Swan, said Letitia primly.

- What!... gasped the two girls together.

- When he was kissing you! added the dancer.

- You girls know very little about marriage: replied Letitia assuming the dignity of experience.

- His first name was Joseph, you told me.

- Thomas Joseph. Thomas made me think of cats.

- Tom is chummy, and Tommy is simply darling. I don't believe you really loved him,.. sighed the Midshipman.

- Well, the thing for us to think about is Sylvia, and how we can save her from that Man. I love her too much to see her suffer. She is the dearest little creature in the world.

- I don't see why you think she will suffer because a man makes love to her, declared Cecily.

- Of course, when he has tired of her, he will cast her off like an old glove.

- I thought you were going to say, as he cast me

off, purred Cecily softly. And, now I think of it, you have shown little pity for me... talked of my nose being out of joint.

- You are not like Sylvia, mourned Letitia. And, in the first start, you set out for experience.

- And what is Sylvia setting out for, I wonder?

- Sylvia doesn't set out... she sits; corrected the Midshipman, always loyal to her friends.

- Sylvia's is a very delicate sensitive nature. You are hardy, and can stand a little hardship.

- I'm sure I'm ready when my time comes. I may encounter it to-night for Mr. Plummer and I are going to the theatre in Santa Barbara. I will ask him to treat me rough, as you advise it.

- What! Are you going to walk?

- Going in the road-cart. I ride behind.

- It's safer than in front, mused the Midshipman.

- What a little innocent you are!... laughed Cecily affectionately.

- This Man is breaking up all our fun!... flouted the Chief Steward. Charlotte is planning charades for the servants in the music-room, and now you are running away.

- Miss Gaylord doesn't care for me in her charades unless they're to prevent my going with Joe Plummer.

- You're perfectly nasty, Cecily, you know you are. Charlotte wanted you for Queen of Sheba. Mrs. Stowe has asked the Spaniards to see us, and they look on you as the wonder of the household.

- They are dears, the Spanish. Well, I'll be Queen

of Sheba, and go to Santa Barbara afterwards. Anyway, we're going chiefly for the drive. There's a ballet in the third act we want to see.

- A ballet in Santa Barbara! scorned Mrs. Swan!

- Sometimes they're very good in the small companies. There's more opportunity for individual talent.

- Well, I think it's disgusting for you to go off three miles alone with that Man! You're, all of you, crazy about him.

- I only rode two miles and a half with him, teased Beatrice. Letitia, would you consent to ride two miles?

- No! I wouldn't ride a mile, though he begged me on both of his knees. And I think you're, both of you, hard hearted about Sylvia. I'm going to talk to Marion about it.

- Charlotte would have more influence; advised Cecily. Letitia, you always do the wrong thing when you undertake to manage other people's affairs.

- You know he rightly belongs to Charlotte.

- Her right is the right of discovery, cooed Cecily, but mine is the right of conquest; and I mean to defend it. There, Letitia, she added with genuine contrition, don't get angry, but stay and help me with my costume for Queen of Sheba.

- Charlotte has searched some pictures out from the library. I'll go over and get them from her, offered Beatrice.

. . . . . .

The charades had proved to be a great success, and the conversation at lunch the next day would have been amicable reminiscences fo their production, had not Cecily Blount brought forth a more interesting subject, that of her Santa Barbara theatre excursion which underneath contained the thought of the Man. The fact that the Man was not mentioned but goes to show the sincerity of ladies lunch talk. There was sincerity to come out however in other subjects with feelings stirred up by the hidden cause.

- What kind of people were in the audience? Sylvia had innocently asked.

- Spanish mostly and tradesmen from the people. I saw our butcher boy and the gardener from the club.

- None of the better families? asked the Captain frigidly.

- If by better you mean richer, I didn't see any. Our metropolitan friends are accustomed to bigger shows.

- I should think you would have found it extremely uncomfortable sitting in such an audience. - The Captain tried hard to keep a tone of graciousness, though it was difficult.

- Why, just before I had been performing for the same class. If I can act charades for the servants, I don't see why I can't sit with them in an audience to see a professional show.

- You know, Marion, chimed in Sylvia the pacificator, that we sit next all sorts of people in the theater in New York.

- A large city is different from a small town. What we do here sets an example, protested the Captain.

- There was nothing objectionable in the show, declared Cecily. A little cheaper in its vulgarity than New York perhaps. But the very cheapness offers a picturesqueness of realism that a more highly artificial performance may lack.

Captain Cody recognized in this a principle of Mr. Plummer. But she gave no sign of thinking it anything but original with Miss Blount.

- It is a question of personal taste no doubt, she replied and carried the conversation back to the charades.

But the subject had lost its charm for all the women. They were thinking of the long ride in the road-cart, wondering what had passed on the trip, whether they had gone somewhere for supper after the theatre, and things that they did not like to ask about.

- I think that woman is unendurable, Marion began when she and Sylvia were in the privacy of their hut. She is always showing off her intimacy with that man. I'm sure I don't see anything in it to the advantage of either.

- A harmless relation enough, I imagine, Sylvia had remarked; but she did feel uneasy about it. Giuseppe never spoke of Cecily Blount at the sittings or of any other of the household for that matter. Evidently he believed in keeping his friendships separate and made it a principle never to gossip. He talked of books, of poetry, of art, and often read aloud from some vol-

ume. Sylvia found that she was getting very little personal grasp of her artist. They were alone in their garden beneath the olive tree. It was an abstract world outside, when they entered it, and the Misogynist brought no rumors of generalities.

She was surprised one day to learn from some accidental phrase in the conversation that the Man was dwelling here on his native heath. Even his studio was the house where he was born, having been remodeled from the original farm house of his father. It had been reserved in the sale of the farm to Mr. Morgan and for that reason came to cut so deeply into the heart of his estate; yes, in the painter's childhood days, before the entry of the wealthy residents, much of the surrounding land was in the hands of the Spanish ranchmen. The chauffeur Carlos had been the chum of his boyhood and even now came and went without formality, never stopping to ring at the courtyard gate. The garden in which Sylvia posed under the olive tree lay beyond the house and further down the hill. In it the painter worked often like a laborer, and other neighbours beside Carlos often visited him; old friends of his childhood it seemed. Certainly they were not people that one met at a Country Club for instance, nor at any of the homes of Sylvia's acquaintances. They called him Joe, or the Spanish Pepe or even Pepito, and he seemed in no way to find their familiarity out of place: Sylvia herself had been accustomed to spend her summers in a New Hampshire village where her father had lived in similar relation to the native inhabitants, who had

flower-bright meadows, where Charlotte was the troubled waters of a mountain gorge. But, they both reflected the sky, they both loved tree shade, and both had niads spirits to tempt a satyr, should any come charging against their course. The satyr, when he appeared had done little charging. He had seated himself picturesquely rather on a stone and both nymphs were fluttering about him in a way that he evidently admired. A fair minded person could hardly blame him if when the mountain maid had sulkingly taken to cover, he should smile on the one that sported in the meadows. Men all prefer sunshine to showers.

The question was not with the Man but with Sylvia. Was she growing heartless, unfaithful to her friend? Since she could not consult Marion, her usual oracle, she had referred the matter to the satyr himself.

And what a guileless, innocent creature the satyr had proven himself to be. He was astounded at the suggestion that his duty lay toward Charlotte. They had known each other in Chicago that was true. How can one help knowing an artist one lives next door to? Naturally they had gone home together in the evenings, when both had been out to the same party; naturally they had borrowed cooking utensils from each other and even shared food when one's supplies were running short. Christian names, yes, that was the custom of the group. There were twenty studios, together, not two.

Then the satyr had grown serious. confidential, but with a reserve that he was not at liberty to explain. He did say, however, that Charlotte ought to marry,

had brought Sylvia to California and engaged a hut on the Morgan estate. Unfortunately she did not know that Mr. Morgan was already considering Charlotte, but if she had known it, Miss Cody was not one to hesitate for obstacles. If she wanted a thing, she told herself she got it. A far greater obstacle than Charlotte Gaylord was that Man, who had plumped himself down in their garden, this painter of women's faces... oh, the basilisk: Captain Cody realized she had an enemy to contend with.

But while Charlotte Gaylord did not seem a formidable enemy to the plans of Marion Cody, she held an important place in the attention of Sylvia Howard. It was not many hours after that meeting of sunshine and packing cases, before Sylvia knew all about Mr. Plummer and how Charlotte held a mortgage on him of three years standing, as Marion had so graphically expressed it. Sylvia had a great respect for the rights of others. She had been bred in New England where men are scarce articles, and she recognized the rights of discovery and preemption. Moreover she had liked Charlotte from the start. There was something wistful, something tragic in the beautiful girl. Charlotte had a genuineness of rare quality, an almost childlike trust and confidence in those who appealed, and Sylvia was one of those breezy little beauties that appeal to every man woman or child. Indeed the two girls went well together. For while Charlotte was passionate, restless, darkling, Sylvia was pleasant, calm and sunny. She was a brook flowing through open

that he should have children to complete him... He loved children, as he loved animals of all kinds, and he often had the children of Carlos or some of the Spanish stable-men about him. The Danish gardener's little daughter often sat in his court-yard, and she spoke of Don Pepito with great seriousness. But as a husband, in the sense of the relation as Sylvia saw it, she found Giuseppe difficult to establish. There was no exaction, no tyranny over women, no stability of attachment for an affinity of soul. He made love to her openly, frankly, as the sunshine might do to a flower. A better figure than the sunshine might be a bee - No: she preferred the metaphor of the sunshine.

He told her she was beautiful. He told her why... He praised her eyes, her hair, which he sometimes had to stroke... the wind might blow a strand across her face in a way that interfered with the picture: then he praised her hands, her feet, her figure, then her distinction of character that gave all her features grace. He discoursed on all these things, as he painted them, with the joy that a landscape painter has for his subject. Yes; there was something more than that, a personal fervor. His voice was rich and tremulous at times.

And in return Sylvia, sitting, also loved him. His firm poise, the agile shifting of each posture! He wore a basque cap of gold brown cloth to shade his eyes. His corduroys held a richness of bronze gold. His beard was brown, his hair and eyebrows browner, his eyes were glowing orbs of brownish light. His lips showed tempting carmine through brown moustache. There was a

flush of rose beneath the sun-tan of his cheeks. He was love, he was laughter, he was contentment... Would she yield to him?.. she sometimes wondered dreamily.

CHAPTER VIII

The Captain

Marion Cody knew enough about Sylvia not to oppose her when she had made up her mind. There was a demure little look of decision in the hazel eyes, a suggestion of firmness about the lips that the Captain had learned to respect so long as she could hold her temper in control. For three years her temper had been bridled when occasion was necessary that it should be. She knew that a break with Sylvia might prove final, at least it would endure for many years, and she loved her friend too dearly to let it happen; she had had experience in losing friends before.

As she watched Sylvia's eyes becoming more and more love-lit, and noted the dreamy listlessness of her demeanor, she realized that here was a greater call for subtlety than had ever been demanded of her before. Ridicule would not serve her purpose any better than objection would have done. Neither would argument or

reason stand her in stead, even affection seemed powerless and futile. Besides Marion found her affection growing fierce and as difficult to control as her anger.

She went down to the bed-rock of her philosophy and planned her campaign on the weakness of the Man. From generalization she drew deductions for the concrete. All men were vain... therefore this one was vain. She would have to defeat this man through his vanity. Fortunately he was handsome, that would help her, for vanity increases in geometric propoption to good looks. An axiom applicable to men as well as women.

Yes: she must flatter Mr. Plummer and to flatter a man a woman must make love to him. It was a humiliating game to play before her rivals. But Sylvia's happiness was at stake, she must throw her gage. She liked to think of it as a tournament rather than as a gambler's game. She was the Queen who would enter the lists royally.

There was something of Queen Elizabeth in the Captain. Banter was her favorite weapon of attack. Fortunately Mr. Plummer was not apt at repartee. A thrust of ridicule dazed him, confused him. Marion began to spar with him on every occasion that she could get with an audience. She dubbed him Don Juan, for his love adventures, and gave him a scutcheon of a sun-heart throwing arrows instead of rays. When alone with him she often changed her tactics, and spoke with him frankly as man to man. Her aim was to madden him, to invite him, and then to throw him off with public cleverness. Instead of the tourney she took the bull-

fight for her model. She was the picadore, armed with cloak and javelins... her cloak was her femininitv, the javelins, her wit. Then, in private, she would stall him and feed him, herself clad in homely keeper's garb. She planned it all carefully and with forethought. She would write the scheme up in her next novel. Her effort should be made to serve two purposes.

She planned frequent dances and dinners at the club. She proposed riding-parties, picnics, and mountain-climbing excursions. The Man was a famous swimmer... so was she; but she would wait before she invited him to swim. She would get him aggravated first to the state that she needed. Only when he had committed himself hopelessly, when she had him humiliated, in her power, would she lead him before Sylvia and them all, like a poodle in the leash... she pictured herself doing it.

Mr. Morgan seemed to come to her assistance. Even the Misogynist took an interest in the game, but as a neutral. Perhaps they were a little jealous of his conquests. They would not grieve, she was certain, to see him thrown. As for the women, they were willing to help her also; at least, they were willing to applaud. Cecily Blount lent good-humored aid on occasion, and Charlotte Gaylord was almost vicious in her joy. Letitia Swan was over-presumptuous in her horse-play, which threatened to turn the sympathy the other way. This was prevented by the Man's hatred of the poetess. He was rude enough to her to lose the compassion that her onslaughts would otherwise have gained him. He

hated her voice; he hated her mannish swagger; and gave evidence of his hatred both in public and in private. She was the only woman who ruffled his serenity But Letitia thought him captivated by her wit. As for Sylvia, she showed little interest in this campaign. She was accustomed to falling in the rear when Marion took command. The Midshipman watched her cautiously, took her cue from her. The Mate had won her affection and support.

There were two who befriended Mr. Plummer when they were present, and these were no mean allies for Marion to combat. They were, of course, Mrs. Duke and her daughter, and they furnished the harassed man a place of refuge. Fortunately for Marion, she could circumvent this assistance often, for when she made up the parties, she left them out. The slight was obvious, and directly felt. There rose a rancor that had the effect of almost developing a hostile camp. Again, fortune favored Marion in the possession of more money. Mrs. Duke was deplorably poor, and could not afford giving public dinners, or hiring motors, and could only attend such functions as a guest. Her little tea-parties and dances were snug and intimate, but Marion could forego them to advantage: Captain Cody could best shine in a crowd. She belonged to brilliant lights and sparkling crystals. These were approximated in day-time picnics by champagne, by loaded hampers, and an array of snowy linen. Mrs. Duke was not an adept at formal conversation, and even when present at these functions, did not shine. She talked mostly of

herself, of her art, and the little personal gossip of the group. But she was employing all her cunning for a stroke, and she could bide her time with composure, at least of countenance... Besides, she simply loved to drink champagne.

Then she could keep up a little game of irritation befriending Sylvia, and bringing her and Joe together. She was good-hearted, sympathetic and tactful, and, above all things, liked to assist at a romance. Besides, she genuinely liked Sylvia as everybody did, and thought to do her a good turn by obstructing the influence of Marion. Sylvia, in return, came to look on the older woman as a confidante. It was good to talk with some one who believed in love instead of considering it as a grim devouring monster.

And even at the larger formal picnics, Mrs. Duke could get in her little work of hatred and of love. It was easy to arrange escapades for the pair to get apart: some flowers to be sought, a picturesque dell to be visited; and the other men could be played off against Marion with ingenious little suggestions and malicious changes. On one occasion she even contrived that Marion should discover the pair in a canyon, but in a company of men where she could not show her concern... At the moment, Joe was helping Sylvia over the stream and practically lifting her from one boulder to another. Mrs. Duke had the satisfaction of seeing a burning red creep up into Marion's face, and she knew that jealousy was raging within her. When Marion gave her a stab on the first opportunity, she received the thrust with a

genuine thrill of pleasure. Mr. Morgan looked hurt, and the Misogynist somewhat startled, but Mrs. Duke preserved all the sweetness of even temper, and Marion realized that she had made a mistake in her outbreak.

That night when she and Sylvia were alone in their hut, it was difficult for Marion to control her frenzy. She did not know that it was jealousy; she thought it indignation that Sylvia should be betraying Charlotte. She advanced a mild objection in this vein, and Sylvia had been slightly contemptous of her sudden solicitude for Charlotte. Yes, Sylvia was getting away from her these days. She was not confiding as she had been in her previous love affairs.

The Captain determined to employ her aids at this juncture, and began to make up to the Chief Steward.

- What do you think of Sylvia's going's on with this man, Plummer? she asked bluntly of Letitia when she was in his room to look at some poems.

- What do you know? the poetess had asked eagerly, flattered at the confidence of such a friend.

- Why, there is nothing to know except what every body can see! Marion felt chagrin at her degradation for seeming to wish to gossip about her chum.

- I don't know... Letitia replied disappointed.

- You mean that you do know something?... The Captain lost her guard at the point of gaining it.

- I know women; and I know men... the Chief Steward gloomed with hidden significance.

- All men are not alike; nor all women... Generalities were in better taste, concluded Marion.

- Some men are worse than others, that is all; and none can be worse than this Don Juan, as you so appropriately dub him.

- I should hate to see Sylvia make a bad marriage. In a way I feel responsible for her, like an elder sister.

- You have good reason for concern, brooded the Chief Steward; but Joe Plummer does not intend marriage; I know him.

- At least, that is a matter for congratulation... breathed the Captain.

- Is it?... I am not so sure... with a trusting dear creature like Sylvia. I understand how you love her like a sister. She is more dear to me than any sister I could have.

- You think, then, that her happiness is really in danger?

- More than her happiness, was the grim response of Mrs. Swan.

- I wish you would help me, confessed the Captain. I am thinking of taking Sylvia back to New York.

- She might not go, the poetess replied brutally.

- Of course, I would merely say I had to go.

- And she might call your bluff and say she'd stay. She might like it even better if you went.

- What do you think I should do, asked Marion humbly. I had thought I might get up a flirtation with him myself and so sicken her with his pretensions. Of course, you know that I thoroughly detest him.

- He can make himself very agreable when he wants to. I wish I could stick a knife in his back.

- You don't think any of the girls here misunderstand my motives in making up to him, do you?

- Women are all suspicious, said Letitia drily.

- I would not humiliate myself if I thought they didn't understand. Still I would do anything to save Sylvia.

- If you want to get him you will have to go pretty far. He's no fool either and he can guess what you are driving at. The thing you can count on, however, is his inability to deny himself anything. And he would score a victory to show you lying at his feet.

- It is my plan to turn the tables on that proposition.

- Well, I will keep watch and I will do what I can. I might plan a daring stroke on my own account. As you say, it is anything to help dear Sylvia.

Marion reddened with shame as she put the next question, was it treachery to her friend or humiliation to her pride?

- Has Sylvia given you any inkling as to the state of her feelings? she asked.

- She frankly admits that she likes him. She finds him satisfying is the way she mostly puts it.

- The other two made her miserably dissatisfied.

- Oh! he's oily as a priest, groaned the Chief Steward.

- I wish we could stir up Charlotte against this.

- If she gets stirred up there'll be a thunder storm, said Letitia. And this calm may be the brooding before a tempest.

- What I can't forgive Sylvia for is that she is false to Charlotte and I think she genuinely sympathizes with her and is fond of her.

- There is no such thing as honor among women, or fidelity when a man is in the case.

- That is something that we always say of men.

- With women it's more true than with men. A woman's tactics are all built upon falseness. That's forced on her by the abominable custom of the man's making the proposal for marriage or love.

- I hate a woman who makes it all the same.

- Then don't blame a woman for being false and being sly. If we could fight openly like the males it might be different.

- Whatever the reason is, I'm worried about Sylvia.

- Well, I'll keep watch, and I'll talk among the others, and I'll let them understand why you're giving him so much attention,

- Don't say that I told you, exclaimed Marion perturbed.

- Depend on me. I have the frankness of a man, when it's necessary, but I also have the cunning of a woman.

Marion patted her on the cheek and said good bye. But she was ashamed that she had spoken so freely with the Chief Steward.

. . . . . ,

- Perhaps some help could be obtained from the Midshipman. It would at least be a satisfaction to know where she stood.

- I thought you were such a champion of Charlotte, she said one day banteringly when they were walking on a path dubbed the taff-rail, so narrow that it required their going single file, the Midshipman skiping on ahead.

- Who is Charlotte's enemy? I will challenge him.

- It seems to me the Mate is running away with her sweetheart.

- Mr. Plummer is everybody's sweetheart, isn't he? I'd have to fight the whole ship myself included.

- I thought you had decided on the Misogynist.

- That for a husband. Sweethearts are different. I shall marry the Misogynist. I am engaged to John. But my sweetheart is Joe and I'm his Annie.

- Aren't you jealous of me then, in this new role of Annie?

- There is nothing to be gained by jealousy, announced the Midshipman turning solemnly around. I am taking lessons from Mr. Quinn on modern Mormonism. I'm substituting polyandry these days for polygamy, as being more adapted to the excess of females in society.

- But polygamy applies to marriage not to sweethearts. You surely don't want us all to marry Mr. Plummer?

- Nobody must marry him, said the Midshipman still gravely. For that reason I am founding the poly-

androus movement, for the protection of decayed females. Are we decayed?

- Don't you think decadent would be a better word?

- Decadent is what we should be, but are not. But I dodge that word because I can't say it in French.

- Since we can't be decadent, don't you think it's dangerous of us to try?

- Danger has its sweetness, mused the Midshipman.

- Which is in no way counterbalanced by the bitterness which follows, replied the Captain.

- What's in the future we don't feel. I stick to the present, Sir, for the present.

But surely Charlotte is getting little sweetness out of the present.

What more would she get, if Sylvia should cast off? Perhaps a tornado will dry up the dew.

We usually depend on the sun for that office.

Charlotte always comes around, a cloud, for that event.

Really you are incorrigible concluded the Captain. But tell me are they all talking because I am flirting with the Sun?

I suppose people always talk whether there is flirting or not. The best thing to do is flirt and justify the talking, don't you think?

Flirting at my age is more serious than at your's.

I had thought it less serious. You alarm me.

At least it may prove serious for Sylvia.

Pray that it does, replied the Midshipman calmly, There is so little of the serious in our lives.

- Mrs. Duke is a bad influence for you Beatrice.

- You do not accuse Mrs. Duke of influencing one to seriousness surely?

- The most serious thing of all, is not to be serious.

- Then I take it that Sylvia is safe. And the Midshipman had the best of the argument.

With the Purser, the Captain hoped to come out better. It is easier to make treaties with an enemy than with a friend.

- Isn't there some way we can show up the fickleness of this man Plummer? Marion began abrnptly with Cecily at the end of the first opportunity she could find when they were alone together. They were waiting in the music room for the tea hour and had gone through all the subjects of art.

- Show him up? asked Cecily open-eyed.

- I mean to Sylvia Howard. She is actually becoming fascinated by him. Of course, a flirtation is all very well, but Sylvia is such a trusting sensitive creature. You and I are case-hardened and safe.

- Don't you think the friendship for Charlotte is the safest way? Cecily looked serious for a moment.

- Charlotte seems to have retired into the sulks. I believe Sylvia, in the goodness of her heart, is really in the thing to help Charlotte.

- Then she will hardly need our help.

- The trouble with Sylvia is, she will get into deep water without realizing it. I want to save her feelings if I can.

- Feelings are what we are after in this world,

don't you think? I think our main trouble is we don't have feelings enough.

- I'm sure we all get our share of chagrin.

- For my part, I will say that I have suffered more chagrin from not having experienced feelings than from the most disagreeable when experienced.

- But you and I are different from Sylvia. What inspires us to growth, merely blights her.

- I am not so sure that she is not superior to us all. She has a poise that I envy. I do, honestly. If poor Charlotte had a tenth as much, she would not be making such a spectacle of herself.

- You don't know Sylvia. She keeps up a calm exterior, but in her heart, she may break.

- I don't know what we can do. Any kind of a frame-up seems unworthy of her.

Marion found she was suddenly liking Cecily Blount.

- You are a damned fine fellow! she exclaimed impulsively.

- Cecily became awkwardly modest.

- I am not a fine fellow, she said dewily, but toward Sylvia, one ean't be anything else.

- Do you think him dangerous? asked Marion, bluntly.

- If you mean by 'dangerous', taking advantage of another's weakness, I don't think he is. replied Cecily. I think he respects other people's standards, though they may not be standards of his own.

- Has he any standards? carped Marion.

- I think we might call it a very high standard...

that of respecting other people's. You see, I am a champion of Mr. Plummer.

- But other people's standards may be false.

- That is for them to find out, he would say. After all, they may be true for those who have them.

- Such sophistry will undermine all the foundations of society. The Captain began pacing up and down

- It might be a good thing to have them undermined. For myself, I am willing to play Guy Fawkes, and carry the powder and lay the train.

- Well, I stand for the House of Parliament and the Government, And so does Letitia; and I think Charlotte does, if she stands for anything. Beatrice Knox is under the thumb of Mrs. Duke. But I did think we could rely on you for concerted action.

- We can't cut him, because we don't entertain. I don't see how we can do anything together,

- Flirt with him abominably, retorted the Captain.

- That we are doing separately, laughed the Purser.

. . . . . .

The Chief Engineer was the only recourse left. This time it was Charlotte who came to the hut one morning when Sylvia was at the studio for her portrait.

- I interrupt?.. she hesitated apologetically.

Marion threw down her manuscript...

- I'm glad you came. My work is rotten. I can't work while Sylvia is with that man.

- I should think it would be a good time when you

are here alone.

- Can you work when you are alone?

- I used to, But I can't work anymore someway. The painting of pictures that nobody wants seem so futile.

- I think some of your sketches are lovely.

- Oh yes, people think they are lovely, but sketches, you know, don't make a picture. I muddle everything when I try to carry it through into something big. The men seem to have the advantage of us in that. How is Sylvia's portrait getting on?

- She says it is wonderful, but she may be prejudiced.

- She's probably right. Joe can get an effect he wants. He has a reserve strength, an endurance. And then he doesn't let his dreams run away with him. He is able to resist the temptation of doing the things he ought not to do.

- And meanwhile he allows Sylvia to fall in love with him. And when he's painted her, he will throw her aside like a squeezed lemon.

- He never painted me, said Charlotte fiercely.

- Don't let him; till you are married to him, raged Marion. Then don't let him paint anyone else.

- What would we live on? laughed Charlotte.

- Let him paint decorations, figure pieces. Other artists have painted their wives over and over.

- If he painted me once he would lose interest.

- Well, I think such a nature is disgusting. But he will always find more women to make fools of.

- I don't think he is making a fool of Sylvia.

- He is making one of me. I admit it, only to you, mind. This confidence must go no further. As I say, I can't write when she's down there. I didn't think I was capable of jealousy. But I must own to that despicable weakness. I'm not jealous of him, understand, but of her, I am tormentedly jealous.

- She'll come back in time, comforted Charlotte.

- I want her to come back now, said the Captain. I'm jealous because she ever went away. I suppose he's very attractive making love.

- He's attractive whether he is making love or not. I suppose in a way he's always making love.

- Let him make love to Mrs. Duke. I won't have it with Sylvia. She's too delicate. I know how she is. She'll be broken. And all for a damned picture he steals from her.

- They say a flower loves to be broken.

- Oh, poppycock! A flower is meant to bear seed.

- He may marry her. He'll probably marry sometime.

- Sylvia knows he's going to marry you. Why don't you go down there this minute? Make a scene. All men are afraid of scenes. They're all cowards.

- We've never been engaged. Not by words.

- Looks and actions are more than words, in such cases.

- I suppose he's looked at a hundred girls the way he has at me.

- And he'll fall a prey to the one that boldly cap-

tures him. Once trapped, he'll prove tame as a house-cat.

- I shouldn't wonder if he grew perfectly stodgy in marriage. His genius is more an exuberance of youth, rather than a life-long creative hunger.

- What do you care if he is stodgy? A husband ought to be. He can always earn a living. He's not lazy.

- I'd like to see the portrait of Sylvia. He will never show a picture till it's finished.

- Let's go down there now and simply look at it. It's my right as Sylvia's friend, as her chaperone.

- He'd coolly shut the door in our faces. It's an artist's right to say that he is busy.

- But she's posing in the garden... he couldn't.

- The outer gate is undoubtedly locked.

- But I've heard Sylvia say people come and go, Carlos and the gardener, and even Miss Blount.

- Does she go into his studio?

- Makes herself very much at home there, Sylvia says, though she never comes into the garden.

- I thought the garden came first.

- That's the court-yard and the flower beds only. Sylvia's posing under an olive tree in the orchard beyond. It's strange he never invites you to his studio.

- We began by prohibiting the men. I suppose he wishes to retaliate.

- So he takes us one at a time. He'll never get me in there alone. I'll tell him that.

- I'd like to see the orchard. It must be pretty.

- Let's go down there now, and say we came to see the picture. Come on. I'll dare you to do it.

A look of challenge came into Charlotte's eyes. All right, come on, she said calmly.

They started at once down the steps to the lower terrace... bedded stones, over-run with sweet alyssum. They kept up an artificial conversation with smart banter and remarks of things they passed. Their laughter was somewhat gayer than usual.

- If he tries to close the gate, we'll push in. I'd like to see him try to shut me out.

The iron gate was closed, but not latched.

- We won't ring the bell, said the doughty Captain, and led the way to the court-yard.

- That path probably leads to the orchard. The Engineer could not keep her voice from trembling. How pretty the fountain is! Look Marion!

But Marion was walking up the path that led to the right above and past the cottage.

- This must be the way, she called back loudly. Sylvia said they were in the orchard on the hill slope.

The Engineer hastened now to join the Captain. It should not be said of her that she was lacking in courage.

- Why, there is no one here! they both exclaimed looking around. There's a little girl seated in the olive tree.

It was the gardener's daughter, Ingebord, who came to meet them, as one proudly doing the hospitality of the house.

- If you are looking for Don Pepe, she said gravely, he has gone with Miss Sylvia to seek mariposa lilies.

- I thought he was painting her portrait. Miss Gaylord and I came to see it.

- The light is poor, replied Ingeborg gravely.

- Why, the sun is shining! One day is like another in California.

- And the mariposa lilies don't bloom till summer, and this is only March, objected Charlotte.

- Don Pepe is going to show Miss Sylvia the young plants, replied Ingeborg. Will the ladies come into the house and be pleased to rest?

- Thank you. Just say we called to see the portrait. We will come again: Miss Cody and Miss Gaylord. And the gracious ladies went down the path and through the court-yard, but outside the gate their graciousness disappeared.

. . . . . .

The long distance swim out into the ocean was definitely planned. Although it had been talked over at a dinner party, the challenge given and accepted in public, the time and place had been arranged in private, and the two met alone on the sandy beach in a lonely spot under the cliff, where each could find a retired place for dressing. The terms were, they were to swim out a mile, to the kelp beds, from which each was to pluck a pod. It was not to be a race but an excursion. One that they could talk about afterwards in triumph.

Although Marion was herself dressed in a professional swimmer's suit, she was somewhat startled at the scantiness of her companion's. Mr. Plummer came out to meet her in a single garment of crimson jersey that fitted his body like a stocking and gave full exposure to his sinewy arms and legs. He was handsome, she admitted that more than ever, there was a suggestion of southern seas about him some way, of brown people who wore no clothes whatever, and who lived half their lives in the water. Her own suit was black with a short skirt for modesty; her hair was braided and left hanging in two long strands, also her head and feet were bare.

They waded out silently almost seriously till they were waist deep in the smooth water, and then laid their breasts and cheeks against the tide. With long even strokes they took the pace, their eyes fixed on the horizon of the sea.

There is probably nothing more soothing and at the same time more exhilarating than to give one's self absolutely into the sea, to float in the long depressions of the wave's trough, and to swim lustily as one mounts gently on the swell, with nothing in sight ahead but the blue distance, with the trouble of land behind quite forgotten; Marion found she was taking comfort in the presence of her companion. He was so capable, so much at ease, so protecting: she had never felt the same toward any man.

- If life were only this, she said once to him... and his silence was more eloquent than any answer.

He insisted on her resting at frequent intervals and they turned on their backs and floated in the sustaining bouyancy, with slight ripples washing their cheeks and their forehead, their gaze fixed on the slow retreating land. Marion was for taking the distance briskly, and sometimes he had yielded to her way. They reached the kelp beds in due time and plucked their bubble-like pods from the dark purple serpent-like frond and stem, and then the girl found suddenly she was weary and began longing intently to be back on the land.

- How stupid we were not to have them follow us with a boat, she said. If we went down or got tangled in this sea weed it would be terrible.

They started back and she tried to swim faster, but he cautioned her to save her strength and go slowly. As often as he could he persuaded her to turn and rest, but when on her back now she refused to look seaward and swim gently as he advised. She insisted on keeping her face to the land. She had not realized that the white cliffs could seem so dear to her. She had never loved heaven so much as now she loved the earth. In her heart she knew that she was failing, but she laughed and kept up some glitter of her courage. The Man swam closer to her now than he had done going out, breast to breast, never ahead, a little behind if anything. He spoke sometimes in reassuring even voice and told her of previous adventures much more hazardous, where he had always come safely into land.

She never knew what it was that caused panic to

seize her, whether it was some sea water she had swallowed or some fish or bit of kelp had caught her foot. For a long time a dragging sense of fate had been clinging to her limbs. They would not function, they were paralysed with fear. She caught his glance once as he was observing her, there was a look of concern of tenderness in his eyes. She lost all control, she became hysterical, leaped to him and flung both arms around his neck. She felt their bodies going down together, she had twined her legs around his own in her wild panic then suddenly she saw fire among the bubbles and had a distinct peace, that this at last was death.

It was not, however. He had struck her, he had loosened her hold and dragged her to the surface. When she came back to consciousness she was lying on her back and being towed head first through the water. Beneath her shoulders she felt his own shoulders sweeping strongly. Beneath her knees and feet the water was swirling rhythmically.

Not until he was standing on the bottom, chin deep still in the gulfing water, did she realize that he had been towing her by her hair; he had knotted the braids together with the ribbon and thrown the loop over his head, taking their cable in his teeth. It was some time before he could persuade her to let down her feet in the water. She began to cry... he was quite brutal about it.

On the beach, a strange perverseness seized her, and she hated the man who had so courageously saved her. He was not much to admire for any woman as he

lay panting and gasping on the sand, coughing, spitting, altogether quite a wreck... disgusting. She knew she ought to pity him. She hated herself, and once even thought to drown herself, and had actually started wading into the sea.

Then he had risen up with masculine authority, and taken her hand and actually dragged her to the recess in the cliff where she had left her clothes and her towels. There he commanded her sternly to dress, and when she only sank down and began to sob and shiver, he had taken off her swimming-suit as if she had been a baby, he had rubbed her into a glow with the towels, and even helped her in putting on her garments, scolding her as a father does a stubborn child. Once clad to his satisfaction, he had led her to his dressing-place, and bade her stand there until he was dressed as well. Then, once more he had taken her by the hand.

It was Mrs. Duke and the Misogynist who met them. The two were out for a stroll along the beach.

- Why! has anything happened? gasped the woman.

And Marion had quite regained her self-command.

- We went for our little swim out to the kelp beds, and I got my pod. But on the way back, I fainted, or something... made a fool of myself, I think... ask Don Juan; but now I'm all right, and fit as a fiddle. Is it true, Mr. Quinn, that I still look pale?

CHAPTER IX

The Mermaid

Mrs. Duke had been giving a beach party to present her niece from Hawaii. The officers of the Morganatic were discussing her.

- A slimy, slippery eel! pronounced the Captain. What the men see in her, I can't imagine.

- And they were all of them actually fawning on her, chimed in the Chief Steward. When men set out to be fools, they beat us women,

- They have a unity of purpose that is positively delightful, laughed the Purser.

- Her name is pretty, mused the Mate... Ada Trevalion.

- Sounds like a novel, remarked the Midshipman.

- My dear, corrected the Captain with authority, good novels do not contain any such names. Chambermaid literature, perhaps.

- How does she have Trevalion for a name, and be

a daughter of Mrs. Duke's brother when her maiden name was Dougherty? asked the Chief Engineer sarcastically.

- A half brother by a first marriage. Mrs. Duke is a child of the second.

- Men in her family die young, remarked the Captain. I'll bet her mother, I mean this girl's, had a yellow streak. Did you notice how her eyes set in, like a Chinaman's?

- And she wriggles when she talks, observed the Purser.

- All girls wriggle when they're green, explained the Captain. Even I wriggled when I was sixteen... think of that.

- She is twenty three if she's a day, pronounced the Chief Steward.

- Nineteen, corrected the Midshipman.

- And eyes like a china doll, and a shapeless mouth which she keeps working so people won't see its weakness, said the Chief Engineer.

- Did you remark her complexion?... actually a greenish tinge; but pretty skin, soft and sensitive as a ...jelly-fish, completed the Captain. Matey, speak the truth, and prove yourself a cat like the rest of us.

- I consider her a dangerous creature. It was the Doctor who set forth this statement in the silence brought on by their reflection.

- How do you mean? flashed the Captain.

- There is something not quite human about her. She lacks control.

- Lilith!... announced Charlotte. Joe has long been seeking a model for Lilith.

- If he paints this one, he'll have to put Mr. Morgan and Mr. Quinn in the background. Beatrice, you'd better clinch with John; you'll never hold him otherwise, warned the Captain.

- Really, I believe Tessie is a little worried about Ben. The period of their engagement is up in a week, and I can see she is keen to extend it.

- And he raving about that gesture of brushing back her hair! exclaimed the Chief Steward. He said she was like a mermaid without her comb.

- That's it! Why didn't one of us think of it?... The Mermaid! No: I stick to it, an eel would be better.

. . . . . .

The discussion was continued in the state-rooms where more personal and private criticism could be enjoyed..

- I believe that Duke woman has had her shipped in on purpose to confound us. I don't believe she's her niece any more than I am... the Captain was saying to Sylvia.

- How should she confound us, even if she wished to?... inquired Sylvia, looking languidly up from the window.

- By getting the men, of course. Don't be hypocritical. You like men's attention as much as I do.

- The Misogynist was very attentive to me last night.

- Oh, damn the Misogynist: I mean Don Juan.

But what did the Misogynist talk about, Matey? I'll wager he was raving about the Mermaid.

- He did think she was fascinatingly beautiful. He called her a naiad of the waves.

- I knew it! A silly chit with wet eyes and mouth, and the men all crazy about her!

- Mr. Plummer seemed especially struck.

- It was disgusting the way all of them followed her! I'd like to wring Joe Plummer's neck for him.

- Why Cody! What is he to you?

- Well, he's made a fool of me, as he has of all the rest. Did he ever tell you about that swimming scare?

- Not a word. He never tells things about other people.

- Matey, you haven't lost a little bit of your heart to that man, have you?

- There wasn't very much of it left; was there, Cody?

- I suppose it's easier to lose a remnant than the whole bolt.

- I really like Mr. Plummer very much.

- Better than either of the others? Perform an autopsy.

- Better than both. But I don't think of marrying him.

- Then I'll marry him, just to hold an option, in case, later on, you change your mind. I'll give you a divorce when you want him.

- You seem to me to have changed, Cody, a little.

- That school-girl is driving me mad. Did you see how she gurgled up into his face?... and he hanging over her as if he would swallow her? I swear, his mouth was fairly watering,

- I was talking to Mr. Quinn and Mr. Morgan.

- Oh, come, Matey, you're getting to be a regular woman! You know you looked at him as much as I did.

- I thought you were flirting with the boys.

- I'm glad I carried it off so well. I was watching them all the time. Matey, darling, I'm in earnest when I say I mean to marry him. Can't you take me seriously, just for once?

- I didn't suppose you cared for him in that way, said Sylvia dryly.

- I don't know as I do, in that way, but I do know that I am going to marry him. They say if a woman makes a dead set for a man, she always gets him. I am certainly going to make a dead set for Joe Plummer.

- How about your theory of a stupid man for a husband?

- He'll be stupid when he's domesticated. I can see him now staying home with the brats while I go out to the opera with another man.

- He's very fond of children, mused Sylvia.

- He's got to marry me. He's simply got to. I shall manage it. But first, I must call off that Irene Duke.

- She can't marry him, Cody.

- She doesn't want to. She merely wants to circumvent my plans. She's capable of introducing a

thousand nieces.

- Like the female organism of the malaria germ... The Doctor was telling me about it yesterday.

- What do you make of the Doctor?

- I find her microscope fascinating.

- I mean with Don Juan. Did you notice, last night, how she looked at him intently?... and then, saying at lunch that that girl was dangerous?

- Really, Cody, aren't you getting a little bit obsessed with your Don Juan?

- I mean to have him obsessed with me. A fair field and no favor, Matey; I'm after him.

- As free a field on my part as you like. I think my romance ended with the portrait.

- He likes you better than any... but we all do... Besides, a man never marries the woman that he likes best. I mean to marry him because he's a brute. I realize now I need a brute for a husband.

- You will be able to handle a husband as well as any.

- First catch your bear, then the rest is easy. I must find some way to slaughter Mrs. Duke.

. . . . . .

Foreign enemies bring domestic ones together. Letitia and Cecilia Blount who for some weeks had been quite distant with each other returned now to a more vivid friendship than that they had experiencied even in the most ardent period. Beatrice spent much of her time

at the Duke's and thus the hut was left free for their intimacies.

Letitia came in breathless one morning while Cicely was still in her dreams...

- They're talking now of a camping trip across the mountains. They'll take tents and stay for a week.

- Who will go? asked Cecily rousing.

- The young ones, as they call themselves, and Mr. Plummer, and Mrs. Duke will go as chaperone... She!

- So he is taking up with the young ones!

- If Mrs. Duke comes under that category.

- Depend upon it, he's not going for her. He's fairly smitten with that Ada Trevalion.

- It seems he has friends over there among the farmers. None of the rich people go there; even boarders are unknown. Mrs. Duke is gushing now about the native Californian, the rural life, the charm of simple homesteads. Also there is fishing and swimming in a stream. The men will sketch, the women cook... quite Arcadian.

- Ada Trevalion cook!

- Both Beatrice and Tessie are good cooks; and Mrs. Duke is a practical provider. I'll say that for her.

- And now he's running away from Sylvia, too!

- I imagine he's running away from Marion more than Sylvia. The Captain is a great champion of the Mate.

- There is always complication when a champion is of the same sex as the one championed.

- But he is not so much running away from some-

one, as running after that Ada Trevalion.

- I can't see what he finds in her that's interesting. She's not beautiful, she's not intellectual, she's not experienced.

- Perhaps that's it. Men like the ignorant ones.

- He doesn't.

- Well, she may be slyer than she seems.

- She's a witch. Even the Doctor says she's not human.

- I wonder Mr. Morgan and Mr. Quiun don't join the young ones.

- Maybe they'll ride over afterwards and visit them. Is it far to the place they are going?

- A two days trip with the carriage. The riders will do it in a day.

- Who rides?... Ada Trevalion?

- She is learning. You can guess who is her teacher. The Doctor says he led a horse this morning from the stables.

- What does her father do in Hawaii?

- What does anybody do in Hawaii?... sits on his hunkers and eats cocoanuts, I suppose.

- Mrs. Duke said something about a missionary.

- I never heard of any missions in Hawaii.

- Does she talk of going back there? Has she just come from there?

- She doesn't talk to me about her doings. I half suspect she's never been tfurher away from here than San Francisco. She looks like the White Queen of Chinatown.

- Can it be possible that she is an impostor?

- Hawaii wouldn't be a very big imposition. I suppose people are born there, the same as other places.

- I heard her telling Mr. Quinn about Mauna Loa. Have you noticed how she twists her back when she talks to a man taller than she is?

- All men are taller, aren't they? She's a little thing. Not as tall as I am.

- She dresses to make herself look tall.

- Stands on her toes like a child.

- High heels aren't suited to her style.

- I wouldn't call it style, but lack of style.

- That's what she affects. She's no fool. I wish I was as slender as she is.

- Your body is queenly beside her.

- But the men are all raving about her page costume. Mr. Plummer said she was a perfect Watteau.

- A Watteau in a camping party will be a great success. How will she look in overalls is the questson?

- I think it's the best thing that can happen. He'll get his surfeit.

- Poor Charlotte will cry her eyes out if they go.

- Who told you they were planning this expedition?

- I overheard and then I asked Ben. I went down on purpose when he was painting.

- You're a martyr to go down in this heat. Did you do it for your Cecily, while she was sleeping?

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The Chief Steward sought an interview with the Captain, at least Marion would be grateful for this news.

- Sylvia will be safe for a week at least, Letitia concluded, and who knows, perhaps Mr. Plummer will become so infatuated with the Mermaid that he will forget the Mate altogether.

But the Captain took a stormy view of the excursion and in quite seaworthy language. It would not do to have the Man forget Sylvia. It was Sylvia who must be made to forget the Man, or rather to be disgusted with his general fickleness and blarney.

- But it was your idea to have everybody flirt with him and that is what this Trivalion girl is doing so successfully.

- Is it flirting, roared the Captain. Instead of flirting, it is going for him in earnest. Depend upon it, she will marry him in a minute and then Sylvia will be in the humiliating position of being jilted.

- What can we do? asked the Steward.

- If possible we must break this plan up, before it is settled. I wish that damned girl would fall off her horse and break her neck, but there's not much hope of it while he is with her. It's the Duke woman that's arranging it all. If she can't marry him she'll get him for her niece. You use your influence with the Midshipman. This Trevalion seems shady company, you'd better warn her I'll see what I can do with Mr. Morgan. We might work up a counter excursion. Perhaps a yachting expedition to the islands. Though I'm terribly sea sick on a yacht all the time.

- How would an automobile party down the coast be?

- The Man doesn't like touring and would refuse. It would leave him free to run off camping with those children. If worst comes to worst we might visit them in their camp, Probably the Trevalion will get sick on fried potatoes and in that case we can bring her back with us.

- And leave Sylvia in her place? suggested the Steward.

- By no means. I would not think of exposing her further. No: if anyone stays, I will be the one. I'd like to have it out with that Duke woman. I hate camping and roughing it as I hate yachting, but I'd bring that Man back dragging at my chariot wheels, and the game would be worth the candle.

- The Morganatic would founder without her Captain. I like camping and wouldn't be missed. And then the Mermaid might not get sick on fried potatoes. In that case leave the staying there to me.

- They wouldn't ask you.

- I'd trump up some excuse, a sick headache. Motoring makes some people ill.

- All the same I should like to meet that Duke with her own weapons. And I'd pitch that niece overboard the first day.

- He seems awfully smitten, sighed Letitia.

- She has no brains. He will tire of her the second day out.

- Why not let them go off then, and we stay qui-

etly here with our writing.

- It's the Duke. Don't you see it's the Duke.

- I'll see the Midshipman, but she is off for the day. Maybe Charlotte could suggest something. She ought to know about it.

- All Charlotte has to offer is sighs and tears. What we need is a man of action. I'll see to it. Like Zola, I will make this my affair.

- You're perfectly wonderful, admired the Chief Steward. You can do anything. Well, call on me. I'll do anything I can. But I do think I ought to tell Charlotte.

The Captain was left alone with her thoughts which were truly in a violent state of perturbation.

. . . . . .

Charlotte Gaylord received the news with some contempt.

- Let him play with the children, she said scornfully. After all I think it's where he belongs.

- The Captain doesn't agree with you, pursed the Steward.

Here Charlotte broke out with some show of emotion.

- What business is it of the Captain's what they do?

- She thinks it's a direct insult to Sylvia.

- Can't Sylvia take care of herself? After all he has only painted her portrait. If an artist is bound to every one of his sitters for life, there's little getting on in

his career of portraiture, isn't there?

- Probably now he'll be painting the Trevalion girl.

- Why shouldn't he? She has a flabby mouth, but maybe he can conceal that in the shadow. As a nude, she'd make a very good model. I'd like to have a try at her myself.

- Really, Charlotte, you are the most inconsistent person I ever knew. Even the Doctor thinks she a dangerous person.

- Dangerous to whom, pray? to the Captain or to the Purser? Do you think she is going to wreck our ship?

- I am sure the Captain is thinking of you in this matter.

- I thought you said she was thinking of Sylvia. One would think she was the Old Woman who lived in a shoe. Isn't she also trying to protect you from Joe Plummer?

- I think you are insulting. You know he hates me. You know I love him. Mrs. Swan began to weep.

- What?... You, too? Dear Letitia, forgive me. I really had no idea... There... Forgive me.

The poetess burst into a torrent of sobs...

- I am so hideous and harsh and old and ugly. But I am a woman. I am a woman like the rest.

- There... there, don't cry. I had no idea...

- He hates me!.. The Chief Steward's voice broke into a scream. He hates me, and he likes all the others.

- I don't think he hates yon, comforted Charlotte; And then she decided to stretch the truth a little fur-

ther... In fact, I am sure he rather likes you. He has agreed that you have admirable qualities.

- Has he talked to you about me? asked Letitia, her eyes suddenly taking on a look of pleasure, and a tremulous sweetness shaping her lips till they were beautiful. Tell me what he said. Did he begin it? Oh, it is so beautiful to be loved!

- Why, not exactly that, dear, soothed Charlotte, who was becoming somewhat alarmed at this new order. Of course, we've talked about you and he has spoken of your good qualities. But as for love, I don't believe he loves anybody unless it's himself. I don't see really why we should all be so crazy about him. He's much more selfish than either Mr. Quinn or Mr. Morgan. Even Ben and John are more unselfish.

- That's the Man of it. The real man is selfish, Woman is a thing for him to trample on and desert.

- And you think women love those qualities in a man?

- They don't love the qualities; they hate them. But they hate more a man who doesn't have them.

- You know more about men than I do, Letitia. More than I have any desire to know at present.

- You really mean, you don't want him any longer?

- I'm not sure that I ever did want him the way you mean. I confess I have not wanted him to like other women.

- But, now, would you be willing to speak for me? I don't mean marriage. I should be content with a day.

- Why, Letitia, you don't know what you are say-

ing. You're beside yourself, dear. You'll regret this.

- I'll not regret anything if I can have him, urged the Steward. Oh, you think I have no passion, except for women, but I'd sell my soul to the devil to have a man. I would. I mean what I say, truly. I am not normal. I'm a monster, I know it; but I have normal moments, I really do. If I'd had a happy marriage at the first, I think I'd have been different, I don't know. But there's something wrong about marriage as it is now, this joining of two people who are strangers... who don't know each other. How can any woman know what she has not tried?.. the very act of mating makes everything different. A woman is not a woman until she mates with a man, she is a girl, and what does a girl know of womanhood? Oh, I have been unhappy all my life, Charlotte, and it was because I made one mistake. I didn't make it. Society has made the mistake by the establishment of these customs, and now it blames me because I have been broken by them. Have pity on me, Charlotte, have pity!.. tell him that I am not what I seem.

It seemed strange to the Engineer that she should be the comforter, but she fulfilled the duty as best she could, and in doing so found comfort for herself.

. . . . . .

The camping party had departed with great hubbub... perhaps as much on board the Morgonatic as on the Yacht, though the former had contributed but one mem-

ber, in the person of the gallant Midshipman. She was missed more than any other would have been, they told themselves. She was the sunshine and the winds from healthy places.

- We are the old maids, the back numbers, said Sylvia sadly, after they had seen her depart out by the stables.

The departure had been an event for them all. She would be back in a fortnight at the longest, but they felt that their winter season 'was breaking up. There was advice, there was solicitude for her eomfort. It was as if their child were going into the world. How pretty she looked with her fluffy blonde hair and blue eyes! And yet probably she was the least beautiful of them all, the Steward and the Doctor perhaps excepted, but they depended on intellect for their charm.

Sylvia strolled pensively into the garden, her hut-mate was in no companionable mood that morning.

' What has come over Marion? she was thinking. She's been different since that swim out to the kelp-beds. Something happened that day, she has not told me of. I wonder if she is in earnest about Giuseppe.

' Why should she not be in earnest? pursued the thinking. Why should not every woman be in earnest about love? Here was Apollo come down among them, and why should they not love him one and all? The interesting thing was the different ways in which they accepted the experience. Marion of course, would be jealous like Charlotte. Sylvia told herself, she, among them all, was not jealous.

She sought out a carved stone bench beneath some loquot trees that gave her the faintest glimpse of the distant sea. Like a window the dark green boughs framed a picture. But the picture that Sylvia's thought put in the sunshine, was the golden brown portrait of a man. His eyes were smiling on her half-merrily, half-gravely. Was he smiling so at Ada Trevalion, she now wondered.

Sylvia had tried to become acquainted with Miss Trevalion. The girl needed a woman friend, she thought. Her aunt Mrs. Duke hardly seemed to know her, and Tessie had proved the most indifferent of cousins. Why had they invited her in their tiny cottage? Was Marion right? Had Mrs. Duke done it for revenge? If she had, then success had crowned her efforts. The men hovered around her like flies around molasses, and Giuseppe was the most intoxicated of them all.

What did they find in her that was attractive? She was young, but so were Tessie and the Midshipman, either of them her superior in wit and character, if not also in bodily charm.

Ada was languid, weak, insipid, like her conversation. She lay in her bed the whole morning, and a mile walk would tire her to the point of tears. With women she was petulant, even peevish. Her remarks were the merest platitudes of daily life. She seemed to have stored away no treasures from her travels; she talked chiefly of the life at hotels. When a man came into her circle she enlivened. She would listen to what he

said with wistful eagerness, no matter if it were a remark that the weather never changed here. When she listened, her great blue eyes became illumined with a light that was both languishment and love. Her lips also became tremulous and dewy, and flashed a smile that still had something piteous about it. The other features, her forehead, nose and chin, her cheeks outside the suggestion of the smile, remained calm, statuesque, and yet child-like. Her skin was like the petals of a rose. As Marion said, she wriggled when she talked Her hands often clutched together behind her, could be seen nervously to open and shut. Giuseppe had once spoken of her as the Moon flower, swayed in the faintest breezes of the night.

Did he love her? Would he marry her? Sylvia wondered. Or would he play with her and forget her like the others? Charlotte said when he had painted her portrait he would be surfeited; there were some rumors that he would paint her in the nude. Mrs. Duke was responsible for these rumors. She herself would do a statuette at the same time. Perhaps they would make studies at the camp. Giuseppe wanted to do her in a waterfall, a trickling, dashing one that leaps into a pool. Ada could be standing in the water. He told Sylvia quite prosaically that she had bad feet. When she went bathing she always wore stockings.

This remark about the feet made Sylvia think he would not marry her. How could a man speak so of his future bride? Sylvia looked at her own feet and found them satisfactory. They were not, however, so dainty

as the Doctor's. Giuseppe once said Miss Maxwell had the most graceful arch and ankle he had ever seen. How had he been so observant of the Doctor? Sylvia also had a very pretty hand. He had praised it often and several times had kissed it. Also he had taken her foot in his hand and studied it professionally, but there had been nothing cold or impersonal in his clasp. He had a hand much given to clasping and stroking. It was warm and firm and fragrant with the sun. Also it was fragrant with cigarette smoke, and his two fingers were stained with nicotine, quite brown.

His lips when he kissed were firm as his hand clasps. They were not voluptuous hot full lips, but sweet and cool. His cheek was firm and steady, his beard harsh rather than silken. But his hair was soft as down pressed by the fingers.

If he should come back from the camping expedition and ask her to marry him, would she consent? She was not quite sure that she would: Marion would be estranged if she did so, and Marion was a friend she must keep for old age. Moreover the Misogynist had warned her. Joe was a good friend, he had said once, but he would never grind out money to support a family. He was made to live in the sunshine, not in the shadow. And responsibility casts the blackest shadow of all.

Sylvia could work, but she liked villas and gardens. The Misogynist was naturally biassed, being rich.

The Misogynist was not handsome, but he was cultivated. What did he find of interest in Miss Treval-

ion? He said it was the witchery of the south seas. He spoke of the slant of her eyes, her level eyebrows. A cultured man, spooning, about an eyebrow! Sylvia had pretty eyebrows, now, herself.

Mr. Morgan praised Miss Trevalion for her ingenuousness. Any girl can be ingenuous if she wants to be.

Giuseppe had once said it was more beautiful, to leave a romance quite unsullied by any marriage. He said the fragrance of a flower in one's memory was more powerful than the flavor of the fruit.

Did he mean by that to tell her he would not marry her? That he loved her he had never been slow to say.

Love... love... what is its value without its consummation? It is but little more than an ache within the heart. A pleasurable ache sometimes, she admitted. But a grudging, biting torment through the night.

Sylvia was coming to dread the nights now, with their endless silence and Marion tossing restlessly in the next room. They had formerly been accustomed to exchange confidences at such times. But now each pretended to the other she was asleep.

Days were long too, here in the garden. They would miss the Midshipman's chatter at the table.

What was Charlotte thinking of, now? she wondered, idly.

Was Giuseppe riding by the side of Ada Trevalion?

. . . . . .

Mr. Morgan and the Misogynist had been enlisted by

the doughty Captain for the motor excursion. There had been obstacles to overcome, and compromises to make, the chief of the latter being that the party should include Charlotte. Letitia had been suggested by Marion but Mr. Morgan had resisted firmly but politely. Charlotte was not looking well, she needed a change. It almost seemed at times the whole excursion was arranged for Charlotte, and Marion and Sylvia were asked as her companions.

Sylvia accepted this arrangement as a matter of course, and disappointed her friend in lack of spirit displayed.

- The car is roomy and Mr. Quinn will drive. He has asked me to sit in the seat in front, on the start, so you will have Mr. Morgan to talk to.

- With Miss Gaylord for number three, said Marion sarcastically.

Sylvia laughed.

- You always talk better with an audience. And there will be plenty of occasions for confidences. It would look awkward for two men and two women to go off on a three days tour. You know Mr. Morgan is a stickler for the proprieties.

- If he wants a chaperone, why doesn't he take a married woman? Probably he thinks Charlotte will pass for a widow.

- Well, since they give the party, they ought to have the privilege of giving the invitations and I have heard you say that you love Charlotte dearly.

- So. I do, but she is more fitted to grace a funer-

al than a bridal party. You know, I shall make advances to Mr. Morgan.

- I thought you were going to marry Mr. Plummer.

- My darling, I shall make the advances for you. Seriously, Sylvia, you might do worse than marry Mr. Morgan.

- And support you and your Don Juan on my allowance. You look far and plan thriftily, laughed Sylvia.

Marion also laughed in equal humor,

- Your town house would be a convenience for us, darling, when Pepe was painting the ladies.

- I see you have taken the name from the children.

- I only learned yesterday it was the Spanish for Joe. How do they get Pepe out of Jose?

- How do we get Dick out of Richard?.. or Bill out of William?.. or Jack from John?

- I shan't quarrel. I rather like Pepe.

- More of the children call him Don Pepito.

- That is too babyfied. It's like Joey. What is the short name for Marion?

- I have heard Marna, but I don't think it quite suits you. It suggests a whining soul like Miss Trevalion.

- Matey, you're a brick. I knew you hated her.

- I tried to like her, but I can't get acquainted, apologized Sylvia.

- We're going to call at the camp, I'm anxious to see her. I'm curious to know how she takes to the role of a squaw.

- She will leave Tessie and Mrs. Duke to do the work.

- That is what Beatrice and Tessie decided she wouldn't do. They had it arranged that she should wash dishes and make the beds.

- Did she agree?

- She was not consulted. It was announced. Mrs. Duke, too, is getting tired of her laziness.

- I wish we were not going to their camp, Cody. It looks intrusive. Aren't there other roads we can take in the mountains?

Why, it's the men of course, that are crazy to see the Mermaid. They will doubtless be taking her offerings.

- Did Mr. Morgan propose going there? I thought it was your idea.

- It was my idea to get them to go somewhere. You see I have hit on the idea that mermaids make good fish bait. I got it second hand from Mrs. Duke.

- Cody, are you being quite honest with me? If I thought they were going on purpose to visit the camp I'd fall out... have a headache or something.

- Now Sylvia, I thought you were a sport. It's all arranged and you're threatening to play the quitter.

- You don't like Mrs. Duke and you say she does not like you, and still you plan to interrupt her party.

- Well, if it is my will!

- I won't assist, that is all. It is not delicate.

- My dear Simp, one can't be delicate with Mrs. Duke.

- At least one can leave her alone.

- And let her take Joe out from under our very noses?

- If Mr. Plummer didn't want to go, he wouldn't. He is the last man to be managed by a woman.

- You seem to know a great deal about him.

- I know some things. That is easy to know. If this trip is to that camp: I am not in it.

- Do you mean to say you'll break the party up?

- There are other places to go. I'll speak to Charlotte.

- My dear, you shall do nothing of the kind. The men have decided on the route.

- Then I'll speak to Mr. Quinn.

- And what club, pray, will you hold over the head of Mr. Quinn?

- He will do what I ask.

Captain Cody's face suddenly became like iron.

- Sylvia Howard! if you do what you threaten, I will never speak to you again! It is the end!

She raged out into the garden like a cyclone.

Sylvia sat dazed in the sunlight.

CHAPTER X

The Doctor

The Morganatic was like a ship deserted after the touring-party had departed. With the Midshipman gone, then the Captain Mate and Chief Engineer, the Purser and Chief Steward had a dreary time of it entertaining the two passengers and the Doctor.

Miss Maxwell began to develop symptoms, however, that soon gave them plenty to talk about.

As usual it was the Chief Steward who brought the news. She came into Cecily's hut looking frightened...

- I knocked at the Doctor's door... Blanche asked me to. She said that Miss Maxwell was acting strangely... Really, Cecily, I have had such a shock!... My knees are all a-tremble, Feel my hand... Cold as ice, isn't it?... No?... Hot?... I have such a sinking in my stomach.

- Letitia, what is the matter?

- It was not what she said; it was the way she

acted. Something sly, and a strange light in her eyes. She had been sewing; but before she let me in, she covered her work up with the morning paper.

'A new kimono? I asked, not to be put off.

She giggled, and then said with affected carelessness that it was her conception robe... Of course, she meant reception.

Cecily laughed nervously...

- Miss Maxwell is a scientist and chooses her words with precision. Go on... What did you say, then?

- I said O! I couldn't think of a thing to say.

- Well, Letitia, that was a new experience for you.

- Wasn't it? The cunning look in her eyes made me uneasy. She began showing me a lot of diagrams she had been making of the reproduction of unicellular forms.

- That's her hobby,

- But these were not pictures, they were diagrams: great circles and triangles, and triangles changing into circles. She spoke of one circle as Mary, and of another as Joseph, and the triangle was the Holy Ghost or something, but all muddled up with scientific terms.

- What is her Christian name? asked Cecily.

- Priscilla. Why do you ask me that?

- I was wondering if it was Mary, mused Cecily.

- Why, you are positively uncanny! That's what I'm coming to. She explained that Priscilla was the virgin form for Mary. Priscilla, she said, was derived from the centre of the triangle.

- What did she say about Joseph?

- That he was temporal, not spiritual. He was finite. The circle within the triangle was infinite. But the finite was essential, though mortal.

- It sounds a little crazy, admitted Cecily.

- It made me shiver. And all the time she kept drawing those diagrams. And she'd step back and look at them as if they were the most wonderful things in the world. And she looked as if she were inspired while she was drawing them.

- Had she also been showing them to Blanche?

- I don't know. What alarmed Blanche was the way she drank her coffee. She called it ambrosia of nectar.

- I thought that referred to the brand; there are so many fancy names, but Blanche said this was a blend of Java and Rio.

- She didn't say any more about Joseph?

- A long lingo that I couldn't understand. One thing was that he would take her into Egypt. Has she a brother named Joseph, do you suppose?

- You silly!... She's thinking of Mr. Plummer. So that's the explanation of those morning visits to the stables!

Letitia gave a little scream and clutched her dress.

- His name is Joseph! I never thought of it.

At that moment, the Midshipman came into the hut.

. . . . . .

Miss Maxwell fluttered about in her study like a butterfly escaped from the cocoon. She thought of the metaphor, and it pleased her... She had come into the imago form of existence. Long she had been in the larva state... feeding, feeding... Her microscope and her books had been the foliage on which she browsed; then she had lain dormant in her years of teaching; and now, after two years of struggle, she had emerged. Nectar and honey-dew were now her only food, and her mission was one of love, one of pleasure. She would float in the fragrant ether, alight on the flowers, and await that fated dalliance of ecstasy, that apex of the experience of an individual, the final end for which each creature is destined, that ensures the immortality of the race.

And another butterfly was hovering about the garden, a male, golden brown with warmth of sunlight... He had spied her. He was waiting. He was hiding... But she would fly away to him, seek him out, and then rest trembling for his pleasure, and her pain.

In the gaiety or her humor, she sought out some paper-cambric and with the aid of milliner's wire tried to shape some wings. She succeeded in getting an effect before the mirror, but they were difficult to attach to her shoulders. At all events, she saw that her hair should be curling; the gray in it did not matter, it went well with the white of the cambric. She would stencil on some symbols in a pattern; but her hair should float in curls about her face.

At first, she thought to cut her hair, before curl-

ing, and actually she had taken up the scissors, when it came over her that it was a nun who cut her hair... That would be unlucky; she must conceal the ends under a cap. Then the fancy came to her that she would make a cap to imitate the head of a butterfly, and she tumbled through her books to find a suitable sketch... But first she must heat the curling tongs, and she did not have any. Fortunately, she could borrow a pair from Blanche. But she must not be too precipitate in making this request... She called down the tube and asked for her coffee.

In spite of herself, she had to tell Blanche some things; so she told her she was going to be married in the evening. Blanche, of course, would be incapable of comprehending the union of two butterflies, but marriage and the church she could understand. The church was considered only symbolically in the mind of the bride that was to be. She was a scientist, and cared naught for churches. What does an insect care for church?

None the less, the idea held a fascination, and her butterfly mate was named Joseph... Saint Joseph, she would call him. Yes, it would be better to conform to the customs of the people. And Joseph did wed Mary, but that was afterwards. Before the marriage, came the Holy Ghost; that was in the form of an angel... a human butterfly!... However could she fasten on those wings?

She was trying to arrange them before the mirror, she had draped some sprigged muslin over her shoul-

ders, when that prying Letitia Swan came tapping at the door, and everything had to be concealed in a hurry.

Of course, she did not tell Letitia anything. She was a good soul, but grovelling; still in the caterpiller stage. What could she know of butterflies and ether? There were however a few first principles that Letitia's mind might grasp, if put clearly in the form of diagrams and figures. Letitia could cemprehend the trinity for instance, the God-head is a simple idea for worms. All one has to do is to draw a triangle. Why should Letitia be shocked at a triangle? Of course, there was an underlying significance, but that she could not grasp. In order to pacify the religious conventions of Letitia, she had named her circles Joseph and Mary. Mary was the circle in the triangle the core of the God-head, the hermaphroditic source of creation. Letitia was not a scientist, and could not comprehend the idea of the hermaphroditic generation. But she could appreicate the points of the triangle

Joseph also belonged to the worm stage of development, but he, too, showed signs of the immortal. The church had only made him a saint but she, Mary, would lift him to the grade of an archangel. It would scarcely be fitting for the Mother of God to wed with anything less. Her earthly protector and companion must be inbued with the celestial essence of the Holy Ghost.

But how would he recognize her divinity when she went to the garden to meet him. Surely she must have the wings of a butterfly, the symbol of immortal-

ity and beauty. Feverishly she tore some wire from the form of a bonnet and set to work with the attachment of her wings. She curled her hair hurriedly and fixed the cap in its place. The effect was very spiritual, she decided. The wings were difficult to manage and kept drooping, then she found that the mystic robe would not go over them. It was exasperating to have to untwist the wires after she had them so carefully adjusted. Her fingers were nervous and trembling, there was a faintness almost of collapse in her knees. Her head was light and buoyant however. It seemed like a butterfly itself. It sometimes floated away from her body and hovered over the cut flowers on her table. Finally the robe was adjusted. Joseph would recognize the symbols. She hoped he was familiar with biology. It was stupid that she had never asked him about that. How the poor wings drooped! almost dragged! But no matter, there were wings in her head. He would recognize the spiritual reality, the material semblance was but to point out the way.

She listened outside her door for any footsteps, it was important that her flight should not be interrupted, fortunately the house was deserted. The prying Letitia had gone away. The servants, too, were in the rear of the house. She spread her wings and floated down the stairway. There was no longer need of strength in her knees. Yes, she found she could lift her feet from the ground altogether and sail out and hover over the flowers.

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The Midshipman had all sorts of things to tell them. She had ridden back the day before with Tessie, but, as Mrs. Duke had joined the party in the touring car, Beatrice had spent the night in the cottage. The car would be coming back this morning. They had made a detour to the coast and spent the night in some hotel. Mr. Morgan wanted them to see the white cliffs and the effects of the light in the early morning. Ada had gone along with them, she and Sylvia sat in the folding seats. The Captain had been very affable with Mrs. Duke and accepted even Ada with real graciousness. Mr. Plummer and the boys had spent the night in camp, but they, too, would be returning this morning.

Oh, yes, they had had a lovely week. Ada was not much account in the kitchen, but no doubt it had been tiresome work to pose. They had kept her standing till she wept... Fortunately there were no mosquitoes in California.

Troubles? Oh, yes, there had been a few. Tessie and Ben had broken their engagement. It was too bad. They had so lately had a three month renewal, and not two weeks had passed. It was Tessie's fault. She had accused Ben of being fickle, as if all men weren't fickle. She knew that before she gave her word. Tessie was no more consistent than anyone else.

- And how did Charlotte seem? Letitia asked.

Charlotte had seemed very contented, quiet, but more settled in her mind. Sylvia, too, was quiet and

thoughtful... something was going to happen pretty soon.

- You don't mean that Joe Plummer has made up his mind? asked Letitia with a catch in her breath.

- I think maybe even that, reflected the Midshipman. But which way it is made up, I can not guess. He was very nice to us all, but I thought he was especially tender towards the Captain.

- The Captain! exclaimed the Steward and Purser together.

- Why, she hates him! added the astounded Letitia.

- It is our woman's way to hate until we have conquered. Then we are loving enough, for a time.

- See here, Beatrice, don't you be getting philosophical, admonished Cecily. I suspect the Captain's victory is for the Mate.

They were laughing at some of the Midshipman's descriptions of the camping party, when the touring car rolled up to the house. The Captain, the Mate and the Engineer got out, all of them in the very best of spirits. They had left Mrs. Duke and Ada at the cottage, and the men, too, had stopped at the club. How delightful it was to be home again, on board the dear old Morganatic!

They lingered in the hall and in the music room, exchanging bits of gossip of what had passed. Then they strolled out on the porch through the open windows. The time still lacked a half hour to lunch.

- Let's all walk through the garden together, said Marion. In sea dog let's set our stays and sail before

the wind.

Never had they gone forth in such harmony. The two passengers came out to join their gayety.

They had drifted down as far as the third terrace when the Midshipman, who had been in advance, came running back.

- I think it is the Doctor, she said to the Captain.

The Chief Steward without further reason gave a screech.

They were all frightened. It was the Purser who was the bravest, in a vague way Cecily Blount had been warned.

Sylvia tried to steady her voice and call Miss Maxwell, but a shrill whisper was all the sound she could make. The Captain became perfectly white and stood transfixed in the center of the group. The Engineer could not utter a word; her face, her whole body was quivering.

There was a clump of poinsettias on the lower terrace, and in these the crazed Miss Maxwell was moving. Her half grayed hair hanging in strings, the paper cap had long since fallen off, her wings now half detatched were trailing dejectedly, her lawn robe was torn and ragged from the bushes. But the inimitable characterization was unmistakable. She was a butterfly flitting from flower to flower. With her arms she gave a vivid sense of wings... rising, flapping, then hovering and poising. Her face, too, was more like an insect than like human features... the fixed eyes, the sipping motion of the mouth, dusty and pollen stained with its

contact with many flowers. The whole garden beyond was trampled down and crushed.

It was the two passengers who ran as they screamed, and that started the general panic of retreat. The Captain ran like lightning far ahead, Sylvia and Charlotte clasped hands and ran together.

Letitia stumbled, reeled and swayed and had to be dragged along by Cecily. It was the Midshipman who backed away closing up the rear, and pitiously calling as she retreated.

- Miss Maxwell! Miss Maxwell!

But the butterfly continued to flutter on in the crushed and trampled thicket of crimson flowers.

When all had once more gained the shelter of the gallery, there was an attempt at the rally of the forces.

- Call up Mr. Morgan, said the Captain, but with a voice so shaken she could barely be understood.

- Why should he be made responsible, objected Charlotte. He had nothing to do with getting Miss Maxwell here.

- We might get Mr. Plummer, suggested Cecily.

- He's not back yet, replied the Midshipman.

- Call Mr. Quinn, suggested Sylvia.

- Or Mrs. Stowe, suggested the two passengers.

This last suggestion seemed the best, and Miss Reamer and Miss Clark went in search of her.

She came and listened to the story in dismay. Like Letitia she seemed in constant danger of fainting.

It was the Midshipman who first came to a decision.

- I shall send Carlos for Mrs. Duke, she said.

- We'll all go with you to the garage, said the others. There was a horror of being left alone.

The Captain suggested some of them go in the car and they could explain, break the news to Mrs. Duke.

Beatrice, however finaly opposed this.

- Tell her, Carlos, that we are in great trouble, that we want her. She must get in at once and come back.

- We will wait here, at the garage, till she comes, said Sylvia. It's less horrible here near the servants and the stables.

It was not a long quarter of an hour before they heard the car returning.

- What is it? asked Mrs. Duke stepping out and anxiously surveying them. It must be Miss Maxwell. Where is she?

- She's on the lower terrace in the poinsettias, by Mr. Plummer's studio.

- We will go down with you, quivered the Captain.

- If she were dead you would tell me, said Mrs. Duke. I think you mean to say she is insane.

- We may have been mistaken, protested Sylvia. We will go with you.

- Did she threaten you? appealed Mrs. Duke.

- No: she acted as if she thought she were a butterfly.

- It was horrible, moaned Letitia. I can't go. Oh, Cecily, stay with me in the house!

- I think you had best all stay, said Mrs. Duke. I am sure I can do more with her alone. She looked at the Captain with a plaintive quivering lip. I have known one or two such cases before.

The Captain walked over and kissed her on the cheek, and the unheeded tears flowed down her face as she led the Ship's officers into the house.

CHAPTER XI

The Chief Steward

There was another live-oak tree that the Chief Steward haunted. This one grew higher up the hill on the other side of the studio of Joseph Plummer. It was on a bit of lawn not commonly frequented. The terrace had never been extended in that direction, and there were no paths that led there, and no flowers. The reason that Letitia liked it was that it was near him; and one day she had learned by climbing it that she could get a glimpse over his rear wall to a chamber window; and she surmised that it was in that chamber that he slept.

She confessed now to herself without reserve that everything that pertained to him was holy. She was not crazy like poor Priscilla... that she knew... and whom Mrs. Duke reported as getting on well at the sanitarium, where the doctors said she was suffering under only a temporary delusion... No: Letitia was in possession of her full senses; but she was in love, and

she was glad of it, and she welcomed every ache.

'It may make me more human, like Mrs. Duke'... she often told herself... 'How daring she was to lead poor Priscilla down the hill away from all us fools who were fainting and screaming like a lot of zanies, more fitted for the lunatic asylum than Priscilla, herself, who went along with Irene as gentle as a child, and stayed with her in the cottage till train time, and Tessie came up for her travelling things.

Yes, Letitia may have let her mind wander sometimes from the object, but she told herself she was genuinely in love. She tabulated all the symptoms, as she made sure of them, in her diary... neatly from 1 to 10. They read like this:

1) A dryness of the mouth when in the presence of the beloved... Before this, I have always supposed the mouth would water. This dryness, however, now that I think of it, is natural, and is doubtless similar to that of an embarassed speaker on the lecture platform... And, also, I can't think of a word to say, even if my mouth was wet enough to say it.

2) A feeling of great happiness, in his presence, that expresses itself in a redness of the ears; especially if he turns in my direction.

3) A horrible aching in the region of the lower aesophegus that I could scream with, and yet that I wouldn't relinquish for the world.

4) A love for everybody, and a wish to do good.

5) A fiendish desire to claw the eyes out of any-

one he smiles on, or who smiles on him.

6) An uncontrolable desire to go to him which I invariably control.

7) A worship of every object that he passes. Before, I have considered this all bosh. I caress the soil that has been pressed by his feet. I went to the saddle room to pet his saddle in secret, and I found Beatrice Knox there a petting it. I climb a tree to - No: I won't write that... but I do.

8) A prinking before the mirror for hours; and succession of alternate judgments that one is beautiful and hideous.

9) A loathing of all poetry... Orlando wasn't in love at all.

10) A desire to see nobody but him; and a desire never to see him either. Perfect happiness if absolutely certain that everybody were irrevocably dead.

One night, she had climbed the tree to watch his window, when she saw a woman's shadow on the shade. It was so distinctly outlined that she almost could recognize it; the head was round, the profile was clean cut. The woman must have been standing near the window, she paused there for a moment and then passed. It was not long before the light was extinguished, and there was nothing more except the vague bulk of the house.

The hour was close to midnight, perhaps after. Letitia never came early to this outlook for fear she might be discovered by some wanderer. Also Mr. Plummer

usually retired late, He entered this chamber from an outside stair-way, visible in the day time, but at night undiscernable in the shadow of the overhanging roof. She had never seen him enter it; she had never heard his footsteps, but the light appeared for a half hour in the window, though always the shade was drawn to prevent seeing in. To-night was the first time a shadow had appeared there. His shadow had never been thrown on the screen though she had prayed for it. Now this woman, was surely a woman that she knew. It was a face that she knew well. It was someone on board the Morganatic, who had stolen away overboard and gone to join him.

There is so little to recognize in a silhouette, even in a bulk of any kind. We recognize our friends by their expression, by the shifting that flows over their face.

Letitia went over all the list.

First she began with Mrs. Duke,

All she could conclude about Mrs. Duke was that certainly it was not her daughter Tessie. Tessie's hair was always flying about and this woman's hair was close to her head.

Why didn't all women have flying hair? t'would make guessing easy, unless the shadow had flying hair, too. She concluded it might be Mrs. Duke but also it might be someone else. Anyway she hated her, she cursed her and then went on to the next one in the list.

The Captain... it might easily be the Marion Cody; the head, the figure, the hair were much the same. Al-

so Marion's shadow would be large, but so would Sylvia's if she stood near the lamp.

Sylvia! was it possibly Sylvia! It looked like her enough to be the Mate. Oh, dear, that ivory tower of virtue, how easily scaled! Yes, even Letitia, herself, would have thrown down a ladder from the balcony. Conclusion, it might be Sylvia and might not.

Charlotte was the most probable sinner, her light had gone out a half hour before. Besides, Charlotte had known Joe for three years, and they were almost at one time engaged. Now she thought of it, Letitia decided the shadow was Charlotte's, and as she thought of it longer, she decided it was not. It was more like what the lamp would make of Cecily.

Cecily Blount... that was it. It was the Purser! She was the only one who would dare.

The Midshipman was a reckless little spirit. It might easily be Beatrice Knox.

Letitia, cramped, yearning in her tree, found her neck growing rigid with long craning. She often thought she would crawl down and go the rounds of the huts and see if she could learn if any inhabitant was missing.

The only way to get them was to call fire, or burglars, or something, and then one might easily run up.

But always she was deterred from this venture by the thought that the light would be relumed. Surely, no woman would dare to spend the night there. It would be too dangerous, coming out in the morning.

Horrible thought! Suppose she should slip down in the darkness, and the lamp in the chamber should

not be lighted! Letitia strained her ears as well as her eyes. The whole night was one long age of straining.

Yes: she sat there through long hours till daylight and the green dawn came creeping o'er the sea. Always she was going over her list as in a fever, her limbs, too, were aching as with its sickness.

But patience was rewarded in this instance. The dawn had passed, the sun was about to leap into the sky, when the door softly opened and a woman came out and stood for a moment on the landing, gazing in... before closing the door again on the loved sleeper.

Then the woman turned and looked squarely up toward Letitia, though she did not see her, she was looking at the villa.

Letitia sat as dumb as the limbs of that old tree.

The woman was Mary Enriques, the cook!.. and there was the quiet of great peace in her comely face.

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